Saturday Special
Jasmine Trias: And then there were three

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Sonia Gandhi to take over as India's PM

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A Pitt stop with Brad

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600 Pinoys quit jobs in Iraq, fly to Dubai

Sports
Lakers sneak past Spurs, lead series

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Uusc Ching Sues retires after 42 years of Palace service

Now, Erap wants to go to a children's party

By Antonio N. Nava III

THIS IS another special day for ousted President Joseph Estrada. Jacob, his youngest son with actress Laarni Enriquez, turns 8 today, and his

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Exit poll shows 900,000 were denied right to vote

A MAJOR lead-up to official voters' lists left nearly a million people unable to cast their ballots in the May 10 elections, according to estimates of a private political group.

Social Weather Stations (SWS), whose exit poll showed President Macapagal-Arroyo would win by 3 million votes over actor Fernando Poe Jr., yesterday said it had estimated from

e-mail feedback@inquirer.com.ph | Saturday, May 15, 2004 | 32 pages | vol. IV | no. 137 | website: www.inq7.net

GMA asks Cabinet to resign

President also orders values commission formed

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE STRATEGY of President Macapagal-Arroyo appears to be on focus on retaining confidence and looking presidential.

In anticipations of a fierce six-year second term, Ms Macapagal has ordered all members of her Cabinet to hand in their courtesy resignations apparently to give her a free hand in forming a new team.

The demand for courtesy resignations has bolstered reports that the President had promised to reshuffle her Cabinet as part of her commitment to religious sects and charismatic organizations during the campaign period.

Another assessment that she reportedly assured these groups was the setting up of a commission that would promote values formation in the government.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye yesterday announced Ms Macapagal's issuance of Executive Order No. 314 creating the Presidential Commission on Values Formation (PCVF).

The six member PCVF will be the government's lead unit in its effort to eradicate from the bureaucracy graft and corruption, patronage politics, apathy, passing mediocrity, factionalism and lack of professionalism.

It shall make recommendations to the President to five "incorruptible and admirable government personnel," as well as undertake programs that would instill values such as honesty, modesty, integrity and a good work ethic in government employees.

At a briefing, Bunye said the courtesy resignations were not tied because the build of the Cabi-

ELEKSYON 2004
QUICK COUNT UPDATES...PAGE A10

COMEBACK? Corrupt ex-Tax Commissioner Mar Roxas surprises members of the group Damayan ng mga Nagkaisa, Quezon City, as he goes to a barber shop and joins "Ms. Palengke" she goes to market, on way of saying thanks.

JoeCon fumes as Namfrel is accused of cheating

By Cynthia D. Balana and Philip C. Tubeza

EE WAS so furious smoke was coming out of his ears.

"Mag-isa ka nang mag-pass sila. Ang sabagay hindi ka pumasa ka ulit at ngayon na lang nandaraya nga kami . . . (Whoever you are that did this, if you are man enough, come here and see for yourself if we are cheating)," poll watchdog Joe Concepcion fumed as disputes raged yesterday over the close vote count in the wake of Monday's national elections.

"Walang dayaan dito (There is no cheating going on here)," the visibly exhausted chair of the National Citizens Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) said before telereporters outside

An anonymous flyer accusing Namfrel of manipulating the election results and distributed on Thursday night at its tabulation center at La Salle Greenhills, had provoked Concepcion's ire.

FPJ cuts by half GMA lead in Namfrel quick count

By Cynthia D. Balana

ACTOR Fernando Poe Jr. cut by almost half last night the lead of President Macapagal-Arroyo in the quick count by the National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel).

In Namfrel's tally as of 7 p.m., Ms Macapagal's votes totaled 3,598,166, still ahead of Poe's 1,948,693 votes. Her lead, however, went down to 49,472 from the 95,892 as of 6 p.m. Thursday.

Like Poe, his running mate Sen. Loren Legarda was able to cut black de Guzzo's lead by nearly half.

De Guzzo, Ms Macapagal's running mate, had 3,010,742 votes against Legarda's 2,833,033 votes, for a difference of 181,709 votes.

In the presidential race, Sen. Noynoy Lacson was still third with 1,11,023 votes, followed by Sen. Eddie Villanueva with 272,124 votes and, finally, Raul Roco with 269,888 votes.

Poe was last standing up with Ms Macapagal as results from some of his bailiwicks started coming in.

The President was slightly ahead of Poe in the Ilocos region. She maintained her big lead in Western Visayas, Central Visayas, Caraga, Cordillera Autonomous Region and the Overseas Vote (OV).

Poe, on the other hand, was leading by a big margin in Bicol, Central Luzon, Southern Tagalog, Eastern Visayas, Southern Mindanao, Central Mindanao and Metro Manila.

Only a few minutes were coming in from Cagayan, the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and Caraga.

Joe Concepcion Jr., Namfrel national chair, said reports from other regions were still coming in in trickles although

When charisma collides with political reality

By Amando Doronila

Just when party

THE PRESIDENTIAL campaign of Armando Poe Jr. was a communication disaster from the start.

As it battled the well-oiled E-A machine, Poe's Kampaign ng Kapakanan ng Pilipinong Pilipino was plagued by latter quirks missing its barrels. It ran a campaign on board a machine in repelling disarray. The internal conflicts nullified and made a mockery of one of its main campaign themes—bringing about unchanged unity.

ANALYSIS

The campaign had no platform to stand on. It relied mainly on Poe's box office charisma. In short, it collapsed from the weight of its own heavy baggage.

The picture of a campaign riddled with recurrent elements of disorganization that primed it for implosion was drawn by some key members of the KNP task force whom I interviewed on the KNP proposal to contest the election results with as its flimsy allegations of poll irregularities.

The disintegration of the campaign was high-

DIRTY POLITICS

After the nasty campaign comes the even more messy job of cleaning up after the politicos. MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando shows how

KNP offers reward for proof of election fraud

THE COALITION ng Naghahangad Pilipino is offering a reward to anyone who can provide proof that its standard-bearer, fernando Poe Jr., is being robbed of his votes.

"The reward is for anyone who can produce a document or hard evidence against those who are cheating in this election," Ian Shugen, a member of the KNP national secretariat, said at a press conference in Davao City last Thursday afternoon. He said the reward would be "substantial" but did not provide specifics.

Abdul-Mujeb Dipatuan Sinsuat, KNP campaign manager, said on Thursday that the KNP and Ilocos Pilipinas would present evidence of election fraud in Cebu and Bukidnon Ricardo Cardinal Vidal on Sunday.

Magno told reporters that all the KNP had been receiving were reports from people in the field about alleged massive shuffling and disenfranchisement of its supporters.

He said another supposed indication that the administration was trying to rig the election results would be refusal of the boards of elections inspectors to provide KNP watchers copies of election

Gloria widens call for reconciliation

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr., Michael Lim Ubac and Christine D. Avendaño

LEAVE THE past behind.

Already sounding like a winner before a clear trend had emerged in the unofficial vote count, President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday broadened her call for reconciliation to include all opposition groups.

Disbursing said Ms Macapagal wanted peace both to her office of "genuine reconciliation" following the fiercely contested national elections.

"We must leave the hurt and rancor of the contest behind and take the high road of national consolidation," presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye told reporters.

Bunye added: "The people expect no less of them leaders so that we can get the nation back on track to face the pressing challenges in the future."

Malacañang made the call in the face of grumbling from her opponents—specifically actor Fernando Poe Jr.—about alleged administration cheating in the elections (*More on this page 2*)

Bunye said no one should doubt the President's offer of unity and reconciliation, adding "her whole campaign was focused on gather-

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
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Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

600 Filipinos quit Iraq jobs

By Jerome Aning and Juliet Labog-Javellana

ABOUT 600 of the 1,300 Filipino workers at Camp Anaconda in Balad, Iraq, have quit their jobs because they fear for their safety, the Department of Foreign Affairs said yesterday.

Eve Nadan, Philippine chargé d'affaires to Iraq, said the resigned workers were flown from Balad to the headquarters of their employer, Prime Projects International, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

The workers would be arriving in Manila by batches beginning this weekend.

Mess halls

"The Filipinos don't want to work anymore in the mess halls, laundry and fuel depot. There's a perception of work in Balad because of fear," Nadan said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday agreed today to let Americans and Iraqi allies flee the Philippines would forcibly evacuate its workers from Iraq to get them out of harm's way.

But the President has yet to order the actual evacuation amid the clamor of some Filipino workers in Iraq to be immediately repatriated.

High-risk areas

She has directed the DFA and the Iraq Task Force headed by Ambassador Roy Cimatu to "speed up the identification of areas of high risk to Filipinos."

"We will not hesitate to conduct labor forced evacuations should our security assessments so dictate," the President said in a statement. "The US and Iraqi authorities must be apprised of our intentions as our workers face escalating threats and challenges."

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said on Thursday that Ms Macapagal was expressing Canada's fears to give its citizens immediate safe haven.

She said Filipino workers in Iraq who strongly feel they are at risk "must be assisted to some home immediately."

The decision was made in light of Tuesday's attack on Camp Anaconda, where Filipino waiter Rosemarie Raymundo Ramirez was killed and four others were injured. The camp is a military air base run by the United States, which is leading the reconstruction and counter-occupying Iraq.

Injured identified

The DFA identified the injured workers as Ronald Dupoc, Leopoldo Balbuena, Pioneto Bayona and Jaime Batarlo. Dupoc, the most injured, is temporarily in a hospital in Baghdad.

The latest death follows the killing last month of a Filipino truck driver in an ambush by insurgents on the main road linking Baghdad with Kuwait.

The government had previously suspended the deployment of Filipino civilian workers to Iraq after the incident, but officials assured that people can still find ways of circumventing this ban.

4,300 Pinoy workers

There are about 4,000 overseas Filipino workers in Iraq, all of them working in camps, bases and other facilities run by the coalition. The Filipinos were employed by firms from neighboring countries such as the UAE, Jordan, Turkey and Kuwait to provide manpower services for the coalition troops and personnel.

A small contingent of 42 Filipino soldiers and eight police officers is based with a multinational force at the town of Hilla in central Iraq.

Under government plans, they will be put in charge of humanitarian and evacuation of Filipinos in case trouble worsens. With AFP

HUMBUG (center), suspected rocket for funds from Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida, is presented to media by Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita and PNP Chief Director Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. in Camp Aguinaldo Friday (AP/BOBBY)

Bin Laden man in RP captured

By Alcuin Papa

POLICE intelligence agents have captured a Filipino aide allegedly acted as a conduit for funds from Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida international terror network to finance terror and kidnapping activities of the Abu Sayyaf, police officials said yesterday.

Khair Mahon Hasanin, alias Ryman, 48, was arrested in Islamabad, capital city on May 3 by the Philippine National Police-Intelligence group, Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita told a press briefing where the suspect was presented.

Ermita, who is chief of the Armed Forces, Air Force, said Hasanin was a "slave incorrigible" of al-Qaida bandit" channeled to Abu Sayyaf leader Khaddafy Janjalani to be used in "bombing and terror activities in the country."

The announcement came a week after Ermita said security forces had uncovered a funding link between al-Qaida and the regional terror group Jemaah Islamiah following the arrest of a suspected JI financier and on the funeral logistics self in Mindanao.

It was the second major arrest by the Philippine Anti-Terrorism Task Force as believed to have links to the al-Qaeda and the regional terror ring, the JI.

Arshad Mamun Abdullah, a currency trader in Graduate City, was arrested on April 5. Abdullah is said to have laundered $20,000 from the JI to the ASG which were deposited in several bank accounts.

PNP chief Hermogenes Ebdane said Hasanin was a much bigger catch than Arshad "because he became a direct source of funds for the ASG."

"He also organized and aided several money in Saudi Arabia for the Janjalanis," the PNP chief said.

Chief Supt. Jesmad Baltazar, the head of the PNP intelligence group, explained the money trail from the al-Qaeda through Hasanin to the Abu Sayyaf.

Baltazar said Hasanin was in Saudi Arabia from 1996 to 2000, purportedly as an Arabic language student, and reported frequently to and from the Philippines.

During his student studies as a cover, Hasanin allegedly helped seek funds from the al-Qaeda for the Abu Sayyaf and had dealings with al Haramain, a charitable organization that has been tagged by foreign intelligence sources as a front for al-Qaeda.

Hasanin first worked with Abdurajak Janjalani, the group's founder who was killed in a gunfight with police in December 1998.

Hasanin told his interrogators he had arranged for the transfer of funds to Khaddafy Janjalani, who succeeded his slain brother as Abu Sayyaf leader, from 2001 to 2003 through domestic bank accounts and couriers.

Hasanin managed to raise $89,888, or about P5 million, which he deposited to accounts in the Al-Rajhi Bank in Basilan Islamic Bank and the Arab International Bank.

Their funds were later transferred to accounts in the Zamboanga City and Cotabato City branches of Philippine banks under the names of men still unnamed individuals whom police were still tracking down.

The funds were later withdrawn and transferred way into the hands of Janjalani who allegedly used them to launch terror acts in Mindanao and Metro Manila. These include an bank on bombings in Zamboanga City in 2002, a failed bomb attacks on a passenger bus bound for Laguna and the 2/3 central station in Metro Manila in 2003, and the bombing of a Golden Phoenix on Oct. 10, 2002 in Bulacan, Quezon City.

About P2.76 million of the funds were in the purchase of supplies and equipment for the Abu Sayyaf, including rifles, uniforms and a speedboat that was used in the kidnappings at the Dos Palmas resort in May 2001.

6 killed in 2 train accidents in Quezon

TAGBIC, Quezon — At least six people were killed and nine others seriously injured in two separate accidents in Quezon involving trains of the Philippine National Railways, police reported yesterday.

Four of the victims were minor students from Gubatan, Nueva Ecija, who were on their way to deliver their produce to Bicol.

They were killed when their passenger jeepney was hit yesterday 40 sacks of rice crashed with the diesel roads of a Manila-bound train in the railroad crossing in Barangay Lalig, Tiaong, at about 2 a.m. yesterday. The speeding train dragged their jeep 10m some 20 meters.

Chief Insp. Nicanor Villanueva, head of the Gubatan Provincial Police Mobile Group based in Candelaria town, identified the casualties as Reynaldo Nicart, 44, and his brothers Gremedo, 20, and Samuel, 16, and Crispin Soliveres.

A third Victoria Sanchez, Joel, 30, and the driver, Antonio Cruz, 36, and the driver, Antonio Cruz, 36, and the driver, Antonio Cruz, 36

Vice mayor killed; death toll hits 143

By Aurelio Bocos, PDI Central Luzon Desk and Artha Kira Perez, PDI Mindanao Bureau

THE DEATH toll in election-related violence throughout the country rose to 143 yesterday with the killing of two persons, including a newly proclaimed vice mayor in Lanao, reports said.

In Mindanao, grenades were lobbed in three places although no deaths or injuries were reported.

Police identified the vice mayor as Joel Cruz, 44, of General Natividad town in Nueva Ecija. He was gunned down before midnight on Thursday, police said.

Cruz, of the Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats party, had been proclaimed on Wednesday.

Lea Nava-Cruz, the vice mayor's wife, said two men approached her husband in front of their house in the town center and greeted him, "Magandang gabi, po (Good evening, sir)."

After the greeting, Mrs. Cruz said, one of the men shot her husband. The second suspect then fired at the fallen Cruz to make sure he was dead.

In Abra, a supporter of a losing mayoral candidate in Bangued town was killed while three others were wounded when they were attacked by a follower of a rival candidate in Barangay Cabaruan also on Thursday.

Police said barangay council Marcelino Bolor, a supporter of mayoral candidate Dominic Valera, was gunned down allegedly by Antong Bayle, a follower of reelected Mayor Ma. Zita Valera.

Bolor's three companions, identified as Antoni Valera and siblings Christopher and Wilfredo Bawasat, were wounded in the attack.

Bayle surrendered to police. He said no one ordered him to attack the group, but he claimed he had been receiving death threats from Bolor so he acted first.

In the Nueva Ecija incident, Mrs. Cruz said Thursday was the day of the General Natividad fiesta and she and her husband had just seen their last visitors out when the two men arrived.

She said her husband, a councilor before he ran for vice mayor, had received death threats prior to the attack.

She said he told her and their five children that if anything happened to him, it would be the fault of a certain politician in the town. She did not identify the politician.

Police investigators recovered .45-cal. and 9-mm pistol shells from the crime scene.

The suspects, police said, fled aboard a waiting van.

Emmanuel Ignacio, Nueva Ecija provincial election supervisor, said the top vote-getter among the town's new councilors would be proclaimed vice mayor in Cruz's place.

In Mindanao, in General Santos City, a rifle grenade exploded on the roof of the city hall shortly before noon yesterday while the canvassing of election returns was being conducted inside.

In Cotabato City, two suspected persons lobbed a grenade near the city hall, where ballots were being kept pending the resumption of the canvass on Sunday.

Both officials stopped then decided to continue with the canvass in General Santos City.

The rifle grenade damaged cables and blew holes in two of the four satellite dishes on the roof, which were being used by the local Commission on Elections office to transmit data to the central office in Manila.

No one was hurt in the explosions.

General Santos Mayor Pedro Acharon Jr. ordered city employees to halt their work. He blamed his political rivals for the incident.

"For two years, despite the armed encounters and terrorist attacks in other parts of Central Mindanao, this city remained peaceful. Who else do you think would do this," Acharon said. With Agatha E. Zorilla and Rose-May V. de Guzman, PDI Mindanao Bureau

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

METRO

Editor Alberto S. Vitug

FOUR DIGIT
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Complete winners
SUERTRES
9 1 5

MEGALOTTO 6/45
22 26 29 32 36 39

Losing SJ bet sold Porsche, Jaguar to fund campaign

By Veh Cambronero

IT CAME as no surprise that the mayoral candidate fielded by the ruling Lakas party against the multi-entry bid by actor Joe Jones stalled behind in the polls.

But apart from turning investment dollar in the elections, Eric "Erick" San Juan has another source to feed him: Sari San Juan has another source to feed him: Sari San Juan confided to reporters yesterday how he was forced to sell two cars—a '98 Porsche 986 and an '96 Jaguar XJ6—to raise funds for his campaign.

This was because he merely received a fraction of the money the party promised him, he told journalists at the weekly fogfest at Sandiganbayan Hotel Room in Quezon City.

Sari, 32, is a business investment. San Juan said he was also forced to drain the "train funds" he was supposedly saving for his two children now studying in college.

A business consultant, bookseller, AM radio commentator, and a "political strategist" for candidates in past elections, San Juan said that was the first time he ran for public office upon the urging of the Lakas party.

As of Thursday, unofficial quick-count results showed San trailing by about 24,000 votes behind the incumbent mayor Jr Ejercito, son of deposed president Joseph Estrada.

Though declining to give figures, San Juan said he was also forced to drain the "train funds" he was supposedly saving for his two children now studying in college.

A business consultant, bookseller, AM radio commentator, and a "political strategist" for candidates in past elections, San Juan said that was the first time he ran for public office upon the urging of the Lakas party.

"But only less than 10 percent of the promised amount reached me. It was hard to muster [illegible]

To augment his campaign kitty, he said, he sold the "old" Porsche and the Jaguar for P1.3 million. He added he inherited the Jaguar from his father.

"I had to use up even my children's savings that were held in time deposit. Ancient [illegible] deemed closed," he said. "Kinawasa talaga ako. I don't know what hit me."

By all, Sir campaign had cost him "more or less P7 million," much of it from his own pocket and contributions from relatives and friends.

Asked why he was going public about his post-election gripes, San Juan said: "This is good lesson for us (media persons planning to run for office) not to trust (traditional politicians)."

Erick, 32, is a nephew of former Rizal congressman and Philippine Senator Ambrosio Padilla. Senator Jinggoy Estrada is his first cousin.

A business consultant to multi-national companies by profession, he has also established a knack on the Marcos wealth and the Ninoy Aquino assassination. He is working on a third book entitled "Pinaches," a work on geopolitics.

Ipo settlers seen to contaminate water supply

By Tina Santos

BINONDO, settlers living near the Ipo watershed may cause the contamination of water supply, according to an official of a water concessionaire.

Metro Manila households get water supply from the Ipo water, shed through Angat Dam.

The Ipo Dam was constructed a "common purpose facility" of the Metropolitan Water Services Inc. (MWSI) and the Manila Water Company Inc. (MWCI).

Frank Swanson, chair of Common Purpose Facilities Services and officer of the MWCI, said that security personnel manning the watershed area could no longer prevent the informal settlers from settling there.

Swanson wrote this in a memorandum addressed to the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System administrator Orlando Hondrade, a copy of which was obtained by the Inquirer.

The informal families were reportedly claiming that they have permission from the barangay and coordination with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Swanson said.

"Our security personnel have been powerless to prevent their entry," Swanson said, adding that they had acquired a copy of the DENR Administrative Order by which the occupants based their legality.

Swanson said at least 47 persons, along with their families and helpers, have been issued by the DENR the right to live in the watershed.

"They've been permitted to plant fruit trees on denuded areas in our watershed," he said.

PINNED DOWN
Members of the Makati Rescue team try to pull out Sonar Manalo after she was pinned down inside the taxi she was riding when it was hit by a private car at the corner of Reyes and Boondia Avenues on Thursday morning. Ms Manalo was rushed to a hospital for treatment of wounds. MANNY GARCIA

16 winning Metro bets proclaimed

SEVEN candidates in Metro Manila's first congressional districts were proclaimed by the Commission on Elections.

On Thursday night, incumbent Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, Pasig Mayor Vicente Mercado and Sen. Teofisto Guingona Jr. of the second district were proclaimed by the city board of canvassers.

Incumbent Mayor Rolando Capco was also proclaimed senator on Thursday night at the Pasteurs Municipal Hall.

Capco garnered 18,130 votes against closest contender Willie Buenaventura, who got 7,406.

In Marikina, Rep. Del de Guzman has been re-elected with the document also got on list in Metro Manila's vast majority 171 votes over former congressman Romeo "Onie" Candazo.

Incumbent Mayor Rolando Leandro Fernando easily won over Sonny Stevens, while Vice Mayor Marides Andres also got re-elected.

It's virtually the same names and faces for Las Piñas nominees, as the final election drama in a close with the proclamation race held at the Las Piñas City hall yesterday afternoon.

The Commission of Elections City Board of Canvassers declared re-elected Mayor Cynthia Aguilar Villar as the duly elected representative of Las Piñas and Imelda T. Aguilar as the duly-elected mayor.

Aguilar is set to replace her husband, outgoing mayor Vergel "Verne" Aguilar, who had held the post for the past nine years.

Incumbent Vice Mayor Luis Bustamante was also proclaimed winner.

In Antipolo, the board of canvassers was scheduled to proclaim last night Congressman Ma. Angelito Gatlabayan as the winner, while it's Emilio Leyble as the duly-elected vice mayor.

Benabilla Dona also seen as representative for Antipolo's first district over Victor Sumulong for the second district.

In Navotas, incumbent Mayor John Tiangco was proclaimed victor on Thursday night. This is his second term.

In Manila, the lone congressional candidate for the city's 1st district, Liberal Party's Atilio Bautista, seems to be proclaimed as the winner.

The Commission on Elections had already disqualified Bautista's rival, incumbent representative Harry Angping.

In Pasig City, the canvassing has already been finished but the board of canvassers could not yet proclaim the winner of the mayoralty race.

Rep. Soren Lanot, who is trailing Mayor "Eusog" Bautista in the race for the city's top post, has won another legal victory on the eve of canvassing.

The Comelec granted the week Lanot's petition to stop the proclamation of winners, documents obtained by the Inquirer showed. Marijoca Ortiz, Lanjo del Puerto, Kate Pedroso, Dave Quinsaat, Charlie Fortaleza

Valenzuela canvass starts 5 days after polls

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and Cyril Bonabente

FIVE days after the elections, partial results of the canvassing in Valenzuela City have finally been released. Except for the highly contested mayoral race.

The reason: complaints about many election returns (ERs) coming from the camps of the three mayoral bets.

On Wednesday afternoon, the board released partial results from 175 of the 1,122 precincts. But these were not released to avoid suspicion.

His closest rival Rep. Sherwin Gatchalian could not be reached through phone. In an earlier interview, he refused to comment when asked about the results of his camp's own quick count.

City Board of Canvassers chair Mohamad Hassan had explained they would not release partial results (or even) raising a furor among rival camps

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SPORTS

Team Pacquiao lawyer files protest in Nevada

DENIED a win because of controversial scoring, Team Manny Pacquiao has sought the intervention of the Nevada Athletic Commission in correcting the error and declaring the Filipino winner of his title bout against Juan Manuel Marquez of Mexico in Las Vegas Saturday.

Murad Muhammad of MMP Sports Inc., the American promoter of Pacquiao, announced the other night that his lawyer Gregory Lindstedt formally protested the result of the fight that was declared a draw in a blow-out last Tuesday in Mike Weaver Boxing Hall of Fame Induction Dinner Main Event Emcee Mark Bazer and Bob D Hendricks, chief deputy attorney general and counsel to the NAC.

Murad was with Pacquiao and business manager Rachlin when he declared this controversial decision in favor Pacquiao is unwarranted and wrong as appreciation flaws by the media.

The 32-year-old Pacquiao, who arrived with wife Jinkee and his two sons, Jacob Manuel and Queenie Elizabeth, upon landing at the airport here, he said, took him very at the dressing room after the fight.

Murad said he was surprised that Marquez is invoking a research with the Filipino considering the punishment he took from the southpaw Pacquiao, who knocked him down three times in the first round.

PACQUIAO

Marquez went on to lose his WBA and IBF featherweight titles with the three knockdowns as Pacquiao explained, he fought with a burning left hit from the second round and later had his left eye and attacking form because of a fractured right he claimed by a "low punch."

In his letter, Bleacher Lawyer asked the Commission "to correct an admitted error based on the judge's misinterpretation of Nevada's scoring rules and criteria."

Bazer also pointed out that the judge, Jean Clemente, had also asked the Commission to correct the error. He added that Clemente failed to score the third round 10-9 for Pacquiao "based on his erroneous understanding that such a score is not permitted."

With his score of 115-113, favoring neither Pacquiao nor Marquez would then lead to a split draw decision. And he tallied it as 10-9, the final outcome would have been 115-113 for Pacquiao with a split decision ruling.

Bazer said Clemente's error was also the Commission's error because the NAC failed "to ensure that a Nevada judge in a high-profile World Championship bout was fully familiar with all the Commission's rules and regulations."

The protest cited subsection 2 of Rule 467.776 of the NAC rules that empowers the Commission to correct errors where "the compilation of the scorecards of the judges discloses an error which shows the decision was given to the wrong contestant or round."

The protest also bears out allowing the Commission to correct such errors even after the official announcement was rendered.

While it seems unlikely the NAC and IBF would agree in changing the split draw verdict and declare Pacquiao the winner, and the Commission, upholding the power of NAC, could order a rematch with a threat of Marquez losing his title if he refuses. Amando A. Doronila

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- YONEX
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UP TO 50% OFF ON SELECTED ITEMS

Nothing's going to stop us–Binay

By Carlos Pabico

MUNTINLUPA going to stop supporters of actor Fernando Poe Jr., trailing behind front-runner President Macapagal-Arroyo in the tabulation of partial election results, from rallying on the streets.

With or without the backing of pro-democrat candidates Sen. Panfilo Lacson and former education secretary Raul Roco, and despite persistent threats to unleash the full force of the law against them, Poe supporters are too almost color-coated now almost.

"We are together on the issues of clean and honest elections," said Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, overall campaign manager of the Poe-led Koalisyon ng Daglukaisang Pilipino. "Kung mukuha lang, mahalalong di pa thrown into jail, sa lit it," he said.

"The bottom line is we have a Constitution and freedom of speech," said the former street parliamentarian who made a name during the struggle against the Marcos dictatorship.

The Lacson and Roco camps had announced that they are not joining street rallies to protest alleged massive irregularities in the May 10 national and local elections.

He himself had claimed he won the elections, but said he is being cheated in the counting of the votes.

Binay assured assholeism that the Poe camp would not violate any law in pressuring what is claimed to be "systematic electoral fraud."

"We are working in the purview of the law," said the former human rights lawyer, adding that he could not help but compare the current situation in conditions during martial law. "It's a replay of what happened before. If you stage rallies, they slap you with sedition charges," he said.

Lacson's are gathering evidence to prove allegations of widespread fraud, said Sen. Edgardo Angara, head of the opposition coalition that backed Poe. He also accused the local media and polling groups of colluding with the administration to project a Macapagal victory.

"PGI himself advised all of us to wait for the count and to wait for the exit polls," Angara said when asked if Poe planned to follow the advice of his friend and backer, deposed President Joseph Estrada, who reportedly urged supporters to join protest actions.

Angara charged the Commission on Elections had inflated the estimates for voter turnout so the administration could produce more fake votes for Macapagal.

Poe government assertions said the slow count and disorderly voting had "opened the door for the probability of fraud and thwarting other election day," according to Fr. Jose Dizon, without naming the suspects. **With a report from AFP**

Press usec Suva retires, assails anti-graft body

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

AFTER serving six presidents and 15 presidentiales, Press Undersecretary Carmencita Reyes ends her 42 years of service to Philippine today.

Well-loved and known for being soft-spoken, Reyes arbo is fondly called "Tita Ching" by Palace reporters, surprised everyone when she opened fighting words during a gloating redness and farewell party for her at the Malacanan Hall in Malacañang.

In a speech at the end of a four-hour program, Reyes said she was forced to retire after being accused by the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC) of graft in connection with her alleged failure to declare a P900 meal of Toyota Tamaraw in her statement of assets.

She said she has her self-confidence even if the PAGC and the Office of the President (OP) eventually drown that last month, or becomes after the anti-graft commission dumped her.

"The case I just battled gave me the deepest wounds that I am still nursing up to now but whatever my detractors were, I have forgiven them, but I can never forget. For how can one forget how the experience has caused me such deep depression and embarrassment that I almost forgot who I was and what I did all my life to deserve such a torture?" Reyes said.

She called on government officials to grant everyone their right to due process.

Reyes started as a secretary in the OPS in 1962. Her unwavering service spanned the presidencies of Diosdado Macapagal, Ferdinand Marcos, Corazon Aquino, Fidel Ramos, Joseph Estrada and Macapagal's daughter Gloria.

The PAGC investigated Reyes after a woman from Iligdo, who turned out to be non-existent, failed to report her alleged statements in Laguna and Nueva Ecija. There were proven false that the PAGC charged her for the vehicle that was owned by her son in law.

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ARROYO OVER LOZADA

'Jose Pidal' goes to Congress

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

ARROYO

BACOLOD CITY—"Jose Pidal" is now a member of the 13th Congress.

Presidential brother-in-law Ignacio Arroyo was unofficially proclaimed congressman of Negros Occidental's fifth district.

He won by a margin of more than 28,000 votes, garnering 66,921 votes against his closest rival, Alejandro Mirasol, who got 46,443 votes. Incumbent Rep. Jose Apostol Carada finished last at 37,333.

Aside from Arroyo, also proclaimed winner yesterday was incumbent Rep. Charlie Cojuangco of the fourth district, son of business tycoon Eduardo Cojuangco Jr.

Cojuangco secured a third term with an overwhelming margin of 70,000 votes, even if he was with his ailing wife Kris Aquino in the US throughout the campaign period.

Although people here fondly call him "Ignie," Arroyo is more famous as "Jose Pidal," having last year declared before a Senate blue ribbon committee that he owned a bank account under the real name.

Senator Panfilo Lacson, in August last year, accused First Gentleman Mike Arroyo of allegedly laundering P378 million from President Macapagal-Arroyo's campaign contributions, some of which were kept in bank accounts under the name Jose Pidal.

But while Ignacio Arroyo admitted he was Jose Pidal, he denied that the account contained campaign contributions for his sister-in-law. He said the account was opened before the Anti-Money Laundering Law was enacted and that it had been closed since. Jose Pidal was his personal account and it did not contain any campaign contributions.

After his proclamation yesterday, Arroyo offered reconciliation to his opponents.

He also thanked his countrymen and vowed to "deliver my promises," which include putting up sub-district offices in each town and city of the fifth district that covers Bacolodnon, Isabela, Himamaylan, Silay, Murcia, Pulupandan and La Carlota.

Cojuangco, on the other hand, was proclaimed yesterday even without the results of Valladolid and Pontevedra towns because his overwhelming lead was enough to cover the votes of both towns. He won also leading by a wide margin in unofficial counts.

He got 61,825 votes while his opponent Paulo Zalamanca only had 11,884 votes, or a margin of more than 50,000 votes.

Cojuangco won even if he was not able to campaign and vote. He was in San Francisco with wife Kris, who is stricken with cancer and required surgery to drain her lungs of fluid.

Cojuangco was also unable to attend his proclamation yesterday. Instead, he sent a statement which said that he considers it an honor and a challenge to be given an overwhelming mandate "under extraordinary circumstances where my family and I are going through trying times."

"I will not forget. My family will not forget. On this happy occasion of my proclamation, allow me to renew my commitment to continue building the dreams [according] to our dreams," he added.

On his third term, Cojuangco said his district would enter a "new political realm with a unity that has not been seen in years."

National canvass of votes starts today

By Marvin P. Mutil

THE NATIONAL canvass of votes for senatorial candidates and party-list groups starts today, a day after the Commission on Elections directed its Boards of Canvassers nationwide to speed up the process and proclaim the winners if there are no protests.

The canvass will start around 10 a.m. at the tightly guarded Philippine International Convention Center complex in Pasay City.

The National Board of Canvassers, composed of the commission en banc, is set to canvass the results contained in 656 overseas and domestic Certificates of Canvass or COCs.

According to Election Commissioner Resurreccion Borra, the commission has ordered its twelve directors (RDO) to facilitate the canvassing of votes and immediately transmit them to the national office.

The order was issued yesterday, a day before the start of the national canvass of the votes for the senatorial candidates and party-list groups.

As of yesterday afternoon, Borra said that they have received Certificates of Canvass or COCs from two provinces, Zambales and Antique, and several overseas posts.

In the same interview, Borra reminded candidates that they have to submit their reports regarding campaign contributions and campaign expenditures 30 days after the May 10 elections, or June 11.

The WORLD

Edited by Lawrence B. Garcia

India PM clobbered in polls, resigns

NEW DELHI—Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee resigned on Thursday after a shock election defeat that paved the way for Italian-born Sonia Gandhi's Congress party to take power in the world's largest democracy.

The result was a resounding rejection by the third party of Vajpayee's "India shining" campaign slogan, although Gandhi's Congress was not expected to turn its back on a policy of gradually liberalizing Asia's third largest economy.

"The Congress party will take the lead to ensure our country has a strong, stable and secular government at the earliest," Gandhi said in televised comments to reporters.

Initially, if surprised, supporters beat drums and danced in the streets to blow bulbs as the extent of the upset by Congress and the Italian-Gandhi dynasty quickly became apparent soldier saw losers of counting evening.

"I am foolish. That kind of cloud was never expected. This is all because of Italian and Priyanka," said a jubilant Subhash Chand outside the Gandhi home, referring to Sonia's popular son and daughter who helped revitalize her campaign.

Sonia has turned India's oldest party after the death of her husband, former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, in 1991. Both she and Rahul were seen in the new parliament.

The condition-led by Vajpayee's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has seen third of its 60s, including its foreign minister, paralyzed by disaffected rural poor who feel excluded from India's economic boom.

Vajpayee will stay as caretaker until a new government forms.

"The people have given their verdict, I accept it," Vajpayee said in a nationally televised speech. "My party...may have lost, but India has won.

"I do, however, have the satisfaction that our country is now stronger and prosperous than when you placed the reins of office in our hand," he added, finishing "Jai Hind" (Hail India).

Gandhi was meeting Congress leaders to discuss forming a government, which party officials said could happen within days but which will also have to rely for support on leftist parties after their strong gains. She is tipped to be prime minister.

With countries abroad, over, Congress and its allies were likely to win 216 seats in the 545-seat parliament and the BJP-led coalition 186. Left parties which have promised to support Congress were allowed in 61 constituencies.

The fall which polls tipped for certain victory only a few weeks ago, was shocked.

"I am half heart broken and half stunned," said senior party leader and key campaign manager Pramod Mahajan.

Analysts say the new government is likely to continue the reforms critical to India's success, it becomes a global economic player, but they might have to be repackaged to ensure benefits reach the poor and are not restricted to the urban upper classes.

Under pressure from the unions—who oppose selling profitable state businesses and want more worker consultation on sales—the ousted team slowed privatizations.

Congress, which fielded off reforms and opened the economy in the world more than a decade ago, said it was committed to continuing the program, but with "a human face." Reuters

NEW FACE. Sonia Gandhi, the Italian-born widow of former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, is expected to become the country's next prime minister. Reuters/STR

Beheaded man died for Bush, Rumsfeld 'sins,' father says

PHILADELPHIA—The father of Nick Berg, the American believed to be killed in Iraq, directly blamed US President George W. Bush and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld on Thursday for his son's death.

"My son died for the sins of George Bush and Donald Rumsfeld. The administration did this," Berg said in an interview with radio station KYW-AM two days after a video showing the execution of his son was shown on an Islamist website.

In the interview from outside his home in West Chester, Pennsylvania, a quivering Michael Berg also said his 26-year-old son, a civilian contractor, probably would have left sooner, were alone his circumstances, until the last minute.

"I am sure that he only saw the good in his captors until the last second of his life," Berg said. "They did not know what they were doing. They killed their best friend."

Asked to respond to Berg's comments about the president, White House spokesperson Scott McClellan said, "The Berg family is going through a very difficult period and they remain in our thoughts and prayers."

Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry the presumptive Democratic nominee to challenge Bush in the November election, said he had spoken to Michael Berg to express sympathy. "I know as a father how I would feel if I were one of my daughters or sergeants. I think every American is pained by what is going on."

Asked if Bush had also called Nick Berg's family, McClellan said he had not but pointed to the president's public expression of condolence for the family.

Michael Berg's criticism came amid Iraqis pointing to Nicholas Berg's family, US military officials and Iraqi police over the young businessman's imprisonment before his execution.

Berg rejected US government claims that his son had never been held by American authorities in Iraq. The Iraqi police died in the city of Mosul has also contradicted statements by the US-led coalition concerning the younger Berg's detention. Reuters

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Court overturns Roh impeachment

SEOUL—South Korea's Constitutional Court announced on Friday it was overturning parliament's unprecedented vote to impeach President Roh Moo-hyun, clearing the way for him to return to work after two months in political limbo.

The opposition-led parliament voted on March 12—barely a year into his single-term, five-year presidency—to impeach the former labor lawyer for breaking an election law, economic mismanagement and corruption among aides.

But the president of the court, Yun Young-chul, said in the televised reading of the judges' opinions that the scores of mismanagement and corruption were not grounds for impeachment.

The court said Roh had violated the election law but was unconstitutional—and if the court it was not grave enough to plunge the country into political chaos.

"The court is overturning the impeachment case," the chairman ruled Yun said at the end of the 20 minutes session in the courtroom, which is packed with reporters and press observers.

A majority of at least six of the nine independent judges was needed.

The ruling means Roh was automatically reinstated after two months spent mainly in self-imposed isolation at his Blue House presidential compound amid a capacity economic recovery, a clash over North Korea's nuclear weapons ambitions and concerns about a decline in relations with Iraq.

"With a majority of seats for the ruling party in the National Assembly, Roh's President has now continue to pursue his economic and foreign policy in a more consistent manner," Foreign Minister Yoo Ki-sunsaid after the Seoul ruling was announced.

Standard and Poor's ratings agency said the reinstatement of Roh may potentially positive for the sovereign rating of South Korea, the world's 12th largest economy.

Hundreds of the judges clapped the court, which is not far from the Blue House in some of Seoul. Judges have been working on a ruling since hearings ended on April 30. Reuters

Corrupt use of World Bank funds may exceed $100B, US senator says

WASHINGTON – Corruption may have sapped as much as $100 billion from World Bank lending projects to help poor countries, a key US senator said Thursday.

Senate foreign relations committee chair Richard Lugar said that if the figure presented to his panel by one university professor were accurate, it would seriously undermine the organization's efforts to fight global poverty.

The World Bank body disputed the figure of $100 billion, adding that there was no basis for that estimate, but said the organization was working to stem corruption.

Lugar, who chaired a hearing on corruption involving multilateral lending agencies, cited an estimate by Jeffrey Winters of Northwestern University that the World Bank had participated "mostly positively in the corruption of roughly $100 billion of its loan funds intended for development."

Lugar said, "Other experts estimate that between five percent and 25 percent of the $525 billion that the World Bank has lent since 1946 has been misused. This is equivalent to between $26 billion and $130 billion."

The Republican lawmaker praised World Bank president James Wolfensohn for taking steps to root out corruption, but maintained that it remains a "serious problem."

"Corruption thwarts development efforts in many ways," Lugar said.

"Misuse of funds on infrastructure projects can divert assistance to the poor and cause projects to fail. Stolen money can prop up dictatorships and finance human rights abuses. Moreover, when developing countries lose development bank funds through corruption, the taxpayers in those poor countries are still obligated to repay the development banks. So, not only are the impoverished drained out of development benefits, they are left to repay the resulting debts to the banks."

Bank officials responsible said the figure offered by Lugar and one witness were not accurate.

"We completely reject the figure offered by one of the panelists," said World Bank spokesperson Christine Wilkinson. "It has no basis in fact."

Wilkinson said the Bank had no estimate of its own on bank lost to corruption, but said officials took this seriously and had barred 300 companies and individuals from doing business with the bank because of corruption or other wrongdoing.

"The developing countries also have to do more to confront this issue," Wilkinson said. "We are trying to help in some of the poorest countries in the world, and in these countries, weak government is often one of the biggest problems. We are trying to help these governments."

The bank makes about $16 billion in loans annually and had $116 billion in loans outstanding as of last June 30, Wilkinson said.

The spokesperson noted that bank practices had changed considerably in the past decade, and that during the Cold War loans were sometimes made for political rather than development reasons.

Meanwhile, Jerome Levinson, a law professor at American University and member of a congressionally chartered study panel known as the Meltzer Commission, called corruption a "cancer" on the multilateral lending banks like the World Bank.

"I think it is unreasonable to expect that the World Bank, and/or the regional development banks, can be themselves secure the integrity of the process," Levinson testified.

"The political and financial interests, and the stake of the governments in the policy are too great. The process will be driven by domestic considerations and the domestic balance of power.

"What I think is reasonable, however, is to expect that where the corruption that has accompanied the process is as notorious as it was in Mexico, Argentina and Russia, the international financial community... can give its stamp of approval, as was done in all these cases, to such a flawed process by exercising appropriate of the 'reforms.'" AFP

GMA asks Cabinet to resign

Front page 1

not members on their respective portfolios once re-elections with Mr. Macapagal's current term ofmately expires on June 30.

Bunye said he expected all Cabinet officials and presidential appointees to hand in their courtesy resignations within the next four days.

Mr. Macapagal had been made aware of the "general sentiment" to purge the Cabinet and the need to "make a fresh start" once the past vote tallies, according to Bunye.

campaign spokesperson Michael Defensor.

The source, however, denied that a Cabinet revamp was part of the quid pro quo that Mr. Macapagal struck with bloc-voting religious organizations, which provide invaluable in giving him the lead in the presidential race based on early returns.

How to create jobs

He called for five post-election Cabinet meeting yesterday to discuss how to start work on creating 1 million jobs over the next six years and other promises that he made during the campaign.

However, she did not actually attend the meeting. It was presided over by Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo.

"The President was trying to reach out to the paper and [Chief Justice in implementing the Feon dem's absence.

A report this week by the Council on Foreign Relations, a US-based independent think tank, asserted that fraudulent economic gains over the past two years "could be jeopardized if the Philippines does not complete the electoral process in an expeditious and credible manner."

People power

"Whatever the outcome of the May 10 election will have little time to lose in addressing a number of them, and long-term problems in the Philippines, for the new President and the Congress, there on years will be limited," it said.

Action Bloc star Fernando Poe Jr. has said he believes he won Monday's elections, and has purportedly amassed a "people power" swell if a decides he lost the rough fraud.

If Mr. Macapagal beats Poe and three other candidates, she will have a public mandate to run the economy for the first time.

She took over in January 2001 when President Joseph Estrada was forced to leave Malacañang by mass protests over his alleged corruption.

Since then, Ms. Macapagal has weathered at least two coup attempts and vast anti-corruption protests in some of the reforms she says are needed to put one of the few economic laggards in Southeast Asia on the track to prosperity and peace.

Bemoaning the plight of the poor tops the list. The bedrock of support for both Estrada and Poe had come from the claims, where the two like stars' portrayals of underdog heroes had made them icons. With a report by Norman Bordadora, Inquirer Research and Reuters

KNP offers reward for proof of election fraud

Front page 1

winners (20c).

"We were able to collect only 10 percent of the IDs, and until now we are still collecting. Some have not yet been delivered," Magno said.

He said that in Davao City, KNP members were not even allowed inside polling precincts even if they showed their identification cards.

Bunye urged Kabataan Partylist to be supportive of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

In Manila, KNP spokesperson Mike Romero said the coalition's lawyers were now gathering evidence of irregularities from people complaining of or verbally trying to pull fraud.

Romero told reporters in the Manila area district that the KNP had set a 1-percent minimum of votes for a position, 150 of which had been categorized as "urgent."

These included the disclosure by Claude Bautista, the winning KNP congressional candidate in Davao del Norte's first district, that he had been approached him to "lower" Poe's "advantage" in the province "from 65 percent to 20 percent," Romero said.

"We are now getting their affidavits on the increments they made to cook up results and declare the people's candidates," he said.

'Futile attempt'

Malacañang, however, said the opposition's allegations of fraud so far had been mostly futile.

"The opposition is taking isolated cases and trying to put these together in a futile attempt to show a systematic pattern of cheating," Presidential Spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said.

"So far as we are concerned, the presidential race is not yet over, but the more the opposition raises the bogey of cheating, the faster we are convinced that they

'Grand design'

"We think that there is a grand design to steal GMA illegally and the design is to make sure that media fall into the trap," Bunye told the Malacañang radio.

Giving the Nantfrel tally, Saro claimed that during an eight-hour period, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday, Nantfrel was updating tallies from all regions, except Mindanao, 3 and 4.

The vote counts for the two camps, both supposed bailiwicks of Binalbagan-ng Maglakaslapan Pilipino (KNP) presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr., remained close, but they would not

Suddenly, Saro claimed, a big age of more than 100,000 votes from Region 7 showed up in the Nantfrel tally in favor of Mr. Macapagal.

"Most of they brought hard evidence to support their allegations of vote rigging and tampering, the vote statistics said they would prove this in due time.

Only have the fingerprints, the KNP claimed, but hard the smoking gun yet," Honasan said.

Rumbled in the 1950s to act as spoil-sending, Nantfrel—led by prominent businessmen and civic leaders—is no stranger to controversy.

'Partisan politics'

In 1992, Nantfrel claimed Marcos accused the group of supporting his rival, Corazon Aquino. Marcos' spokesman Gemmes, chair of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp., at the Diamond Hotel in Manila Thursday night.

"I suggest that it is not appropriate for Commissioner Garchitorena to be seen with Mr. Honasan under the circumstances, when Pagcor stands accused of funding the President's election bid," Pimentel said, in a statement he had prepared for yesterday's KNP news conference with foreign correspondents at the Manila Hotel.

According to Pimentel, the two were talked at the hotel's Gilaen function room, and at 9:15 pm, Garchitena left the room with Honasan following shortly. "who's locked like Gumbo this."

He said one of the security men carried a paper bag measuring 18"x12" that "looked full" and was "supplied at the opening."

Pimentel said he was implying that money changed hands at the meeting. Pimentel cruelly said: "You draw your own conclusions from my statement."

"More speculation," Pimentel also said, was the report he got that Garchitena was booked in room No. 1004 of the hotel, and that the suite arranged by host senator Willy King.

Also at the hotel that night was Commission on Commissioner Jr. Fernandez.

'You can't hide'

Honasan accused Garchitena of involvement in "digging dirt on [opposition] candidates" and "planting" [election-rigging and cheating] in Mindanao in the 1995 elections.

"We are watching his every move," Honasan said. "I want all those who manipulate the elections to know: You can run but you can't hide. We will not allow you to do so."

Honasan also said he was completing his own evidence of poll fraud.

He said the evidence he would present included an ID from his home province of Mission Oriental showing that "the election process there has been compromised."

He said he got hold of a copy of the ID from Precinct No. 304 B, Barangay Poblacion de Jasaan, El Salvador, which showed the number of actual voters did not correspond with the number of ballots in the ballot box.

Of the 147 registered voters in that precinct, he said, there were only 70 who actually cast their votes. But the ballots in the box 136.

'Kl Quick Count'

The KNP also accused Malacañang of setting into motion "another cheating tally machine" through the 4000 Computer Inc. project's "Kl Quick Count."

It circulated copies of a memorandum dated April 30 signed by AMA chair Rodolfo Aguilar V to Mr. Macapagal informing her of the three-day quick count.

The KNP claimed that it had obtained a copy of the memorandum from "Pedro insiders."

"I have already provided full financial support and the necessary infrastructure, equipment, logistics for the Kl Quick Count operation," the memorandum had Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr.

The memorandum dated May 12 indicated that the AMA was bidding 10 computer consultants and technicians, 156 representatives on two each for the 78 provincial canvassing boards, 80 accelerators and 5 servers connected to a DSL/4k megabytes terminal, and 53 phone lines and fax machines.

Copies of the memorandum were supposedly furnished Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo and former presidential chief legal counsel Avelino Cruz Jr., a member of Mr. Macapagal's campaign team.

In a statement, the KNP said the administration had "set up this new quick count scheme to boost its 'display-boost' cheating operations in a desperate bid to reverse genuine results of votes that show big margins" for Poe.

But in a statement, AMA chief legal counsel and spokesperson Rodolfo Aganon said, "We strongly and categorically deny and disown these highly malicious imputations. We have made available to media [what] our quick count is quick count operations in the past five elections, and we are doing our best to keep our integrity and credibility intact and unsullied."

He added: "The KNP knows that there was a memo sent [signifies] to [Ms Macapagal] regarding the alleged Kl quick-count operation is pure hogwash. It is a spurious document, and even [Aganon's] signature is a forgery. It seeks to smear the KNP and Fernando Poe Jr. to arouse whatever little sympathy is left for him among the Filipino people."

Aganon said AMA was "prepared to cite all criminal and civil cases against all those responsible for these highly malicious, libelous and unfounded imputations."

Who guilty

Lakas-CMD executive director Joe Mc. Mallos lashed back at the opposition, saying it had no right to act like a hapless victim of electoral fraud because it was guilty of fraudulent moves in areas ahead.

Representing the ruling party at a press briefing hosted by the Coalition for Honest and Peaceful Elections (CHPE), Mallos cited reports that opposition bailiwicks in Metro Manila and nearby provinces had been host to "massive vote-buying" and problematic use of bio-electronic devices.

He said Lakas had also received information that two retired generals, Jovito Palparan and Jaime Echevarria, were going around the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao "with boxes of money."

"I do not know what they are doing there. They are with KNP. I mean, let's call a spade a spade. Having an ungodly lump book on matters [don't pretend to be clean when you're not clean]," Mallos said in an interview after the press conference.

He said the other presidential candidates should instead emulate Sen. Panfilo Lacson, who had agreed to a "genuine reconciliation" with the government after the elections.

Mallos heaped praise on Lacson, a staunch critic of Ms Macapagal before and throughout the campaign period, saying the senator's statement was the kind of action that would set good their votes had no business running for any post.

HCDPE's course of action

Msgr Manolo Archbishop Cayetano Rosales, Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal and Davao Archbishop Fernando Capalla assure the conduct of the May 10 elections would determine the course of action that the HCDPE coalition would take in the coming days, according to Atty. Jose Bayo, director of the multi-sectoral group.

But the Catholic archbishops, the steering thrones of HCDPE, were absent from the press conference called by the coalition yesterday in Intramuros, Manila.

On by Bayo said Rosales was in Mindanao, Capalla in the Philippines and Vidal in Cebu. Reports from Anthony S. Alfado, PDI Mindanao Bureau; Juliet Labog-Javellana, Carlito Pablo, Christine O. Avendaño and Blanche S. Rivera in Manila.

Joe Concepcion fumes as Namfrel is accused of cheating

Front page 1

The flyer accused Concepcion of being involved in "dagdag-bawas" (vote-padding and cheating) in allegedly favor President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Opposition lawmakers Pimentel Sen. Juan M. Flavier and Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan came to the office of the business on Thursday night and voiced concern over the slow vote count.

'Grand design'

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'Partisan politics'

In 1992, Namfrel claimed Marcos accused the group of supporting his rival, Corazon Aquino. Marcos' spokesman Gemmes, chair of the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp., at the Diamond Hotel in Manila Thursday night.

"I suggest that it is not appropriate for Commissioner Garchitorena to be seen with Mr. Honasan under the circumstances, when Pagcor stands accused of funding the President's election bid," Pimentel said, in a statement he had prepared for yesterday's KNP news conference with foreign correspondents at the Manila Hotel.

According to Pimentel, the two were talked at the hotel's Gilaen function room, and at 9:15 pm, Garchitena left the room with Honasan following shortly. "who's locked like Gumbo this."

He said one of the security men carried a paper bag measuring 18"x12" that "looked full" and was "supplied at the opening."

Pimentel said he was implying that money changed hands at the meeting. Pimentel cruelly said: "You draw your own conclusions from my statement."

"More speculation," Pimentel also said, was the report he got that Garchitena was booked in room No. 1004 of the hotel, and that the suite arranged by host senator Willy King.

Also at the hotel that night was Commission on Commissioner Jr. Fernandez.

'You can't hide'

Honasan accused Garchitena of involvement in "digging dirt on [opposition] candidates" and "planting" [election-rigging and cheating] in Mindanao in the 1995 elections.

"We are watching his every move," Pimentel said. "I want all those who manipulate the elections to know: You can run but you can't hide. We will not allow you to do so."

Honasan also said he was completing his own evidence of poll fraud.

He said the evidence he would present included an ID from his home province of Mission Oriental showing that "the election process there has been compromised."

He said he got hold of a copy of the ID from Precinct No. 304 B, Barangay Poblacion de Jasaan, El Salvador, which showed the number of actual voters did not correspond with the number of ballots in the ballot box.

Of the 147 registered voters in that precinct, he said, there were only 70 who actually cast their votes. But the ballots in the box 136.

'Kl Quick Count'

The KNP also accused Malacañang of setting into motion "another cheating tally machine" through the 4000 Computer Inc. project's "Kl Quick Count."

It circulated copies of a memorandum dated April 30 signed by AMA chair Rodolfo Aguilar V to Mr. Macapagal informing her of the three-day quick count.

The KNP claimed that it had obtained a copy of the memorandum from "Pedro insiders."

"I have already provided full financial support and the necessary infrastructure, equipment, logistics for the Kl Quick Count operation," the memorandum had Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr.

The memorandum dated May 12 indicated that the AMA was bidding 10 computer consultants and technicians, 156 representatives on two each for the 78 provincial canvassing boards, 80 accelerators and 5 servers connected to a DSL/4k megabytes terminal, and 53 phone lines and fax machines.

Copies of the memorandum were supposedly furnished Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo and former presidential chief legal counsel Avelino Cruz Jr., a member of Mr. Macapagal's campaign team.

"NO EMOBING gun yet." Senators Honasan and Enrile at the Inquirer office Thursday night. "But the finger prints are there."

In a statement, the KNP said the administration had "set up this new quick count scheme to boost its 'display-boost' cheating operations in a desperate bid to reverse genuine results of votes that show big margins" for Poe.

But in a statement, AMA chief legal counsel and spokesperson Rodolfo Aganon said, "We strongly and categorically deny and disown these highly malicious imputations. We have made available to media [what] our quick count is quick count operations in the past five elections, and we are doing our best to keep our integrity and credibility intact and unsullied."

He added: "The KNP knows that there was a memo sent [signifies] to [Ms Macapagal] regarding the alleged Kl quick-count operation is pure hogwash. It is a spurious document, and even [Aganon's] signature is a forgery. It seeks to smear the KNP and Fernando Poe Jr. to arouse whatever little sympathy is left for him among the Filipino people."

Aganon said AMA was "prepared to cite all criminal and civil cases against all those responsible for these highly malicious, libelous and unfounded imputations."

Who guilty

Lakas-CMD executive director Joe Mc. Mallos lashed back at the opposition, saying it had no right to act like a hapless victim of electoral fraud because it was guilty of fraudulent moves in areas ahead.

Representing the ruling party at a press briefing hosted by the Coalition for Honest and Peaceful Elections (HCDPE), Mallos cited reports that opposition bailiwicks in Metro Manila and nearby provinces had been host to "massive vote-buying" and problematic use of bio-electronic devices.

He said Lakas had also received information that two retired generals, Jovito Palparan and Jaime Echevarria, were going around the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao "with boxes of money."

"I do not know what they are doing there. They are with KNP. I mean, let's call a spade a spade. Having an ungodly lump book on matters [don't pretend to be clean when you're not clean]," Mallos said in an interview after the press conference.

He said the other presidential candidates should instead emulate Sen. Panfilo Lacson, who had agreed to a "genuine reconciliation" with the government after the elections.

Mallos heaped praise on Lacson, a staunch critic of Ms Macapagal before and throughout the campaign period, saying the senator's statement was the kind of action that would set good their votes had no business running for any post.

HCDPE's course of action

Msgr Manolo Archbishop Cayetano Rosales, Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal and Davao Archbishop Fernando Capalla assure the conduct of the May 10 elections would determine the course of action that the HCDPE coalition would take in the coming days, according to Atty. Jose Bayo, director of the multi-sectoral group.

But the Catholic archbishops, the steering thrones of HCDPE, were absent from the press conference called by the coalition yesterday in Intramuros, Manila.

On by Bayo said Rosales was in Mindanao, Capalla in the Philippines and Vidal in Cebu. Reports from Anthony S. Alfado, PDI Mindanao Bureau; Juliet Labog-Javellana, Carlito Pablo, Christine O. Avendaño and Blanche S. Rivera in Manila.

FPJ cuts by half . . .

Front page 1

to suspend them to increase by midnight.

He denied the opposition's charge that Nantfrel was "tinkering" in favor of Mr Macapagal by giving precincts to election servants from her bailiwicks. (See related story on Page A11)

De Castro's voice came mostly from the President's bailiwicks, namely Western Visayas, Central Visayas, Southern Mindanao, and Caraga.

On the other hand, Legarda was getting votes in Ilocos, Central Luzon, Cagayan Valley, Eastern Visayas, Central Mindanao, ARMM and Zamboanga.

In the senatorial race, Mar Roxas reached the 2-million mark, increasing his lead over second placer Ramon "Bong" Revilla by half a million votes.

Roxas moved from the 12th to the 11th spot in the 12 senatorial seats.

There was no change in the ranking from the 3rd up to the 10th spots.

Aquilino Pimentel was still

Front page 1

ballot's tally because they still had to be notified due to incomplete information, like the number of registered voters. He said Nantfrel would not sacrifice accuracy for speed.

"We are more stringent than any other counts and is the Nantfrel tally considered as the official source of papers with hundreds of names

Since then, Ms Macapagal has weathered at least two coup attempts and vast anti-corruption protests in some of the reforms she says are needed to put one of the few economic laggards in Southeast Asia on the track to prosperity and peace.

Bemoaning the plight of the poor tops the list. The bedrock of support for both Estrada and Poe had come from the claims, where the two like stars' portrayals of underdog heroes had made them icons. With a report by Norman Bordadora, Inquirer Research and Reuters

2 pro-Ping PNP colonels sacked on election day

By Christian V. Esguerra

PNP's police colonels were sacked on election day for allegedly working on the presidential campaign of Sen. Panfilo Lacson, a Philippine National Police official said yesterday.

The official said the reports—which were being monitored—had been sending calendar to help Lacson get support in their respective areas of jurisdiction on Lacson.

The source, a police general, refused to identify the two in reference to PNP Chief Director Gideon Ilo's decision to reveal their names only after the investigation.

One of the colonels had been given a huge amount of money apparently to be distributed to prospective Lacson supporters in his area.

"We're not sure what the money was intended for," the source said the important person, day. "But we know he's referred to what we call a 'special operation' for Lacson."

At least 10 other police officers had been stationed in the PNP headquarters in Camp Crame because of reports that they were involved in partisan political activities, according to the source.

Upon learning that their activities were being monitored, most of the officers immediately went to Camp Crame to deny reports.

"The true superintendents knew they were in the list but they never showed up," the official said. "The leadership had no choice but to fire them to keep them from continuing their illegal activities."

Palace had announced that two policemen would be sacked for violating the PNP policy against officers getting involved in partisan political activities.

But his spokesperson, Chief Supt. Joel Goltiao, admitted that the violation was minor. "There was really no way of telling if a policeman was partisan unless he was caught in the act of distributing campaign materials for a candidate or he endorsed a candidate during a campaign sortie."

Erap general's visit to South irks Palace

By Cil Cabacungan Jr. and Alexis Romero

MALACAÑANG is getting exasperated over persistent reports that former military officers, led by retired Lt. Gen. Jacinto Ligot, are meeting political leaders among military personnel in Mindanao about the alleged effort by the government to rig the outcome of the elections.

The Armed Forces Chief Wednesday that a group of retired military generals had been wooing Mindanao officials to talk to field commanders and recruit them for a plot to overthrow the government. While he did not identify the retired officers, the military said that Ligot—who is the first Armed Forces chief of staff of deposed President Estrada—was in Mindanao during the elections.

Presidential campaign spokesperson Michael Defensor said the government had been alerted by intelligence officers of Ligot's activities, so he warned that the administration would take action against him should he continue with his campaign.

Defensor said it had given the warning to retired police and military generals not to erode the "partisan politics" and "partisan designed" a few days before the May 10 polls.

Defensor held a press conference earlier where he faced an alleged plot by the administration to bribe officials of the Commission on Elections, members, treasurers and prosecutors to rig the canvassing of votes from the precinct up to the provincial levels.

Observe proper decorum

In Camp Aguinaldo, Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita advised retired generals to maintain "proper decorum" when they meet soldiers and field commanders in their service around the country.

"Bill Clinton is nothing wrong about people, especially retired, in get involved in politics," Ermita said a press conference. "However we just wish that if ever they are working with any political group, they will just maintain their usual decorum."

Ermita admitted though that it was not clear to them what prompted the generals to conduct these trips to the provinces. "We have no idea about the motives of the generals but I suppose, as we read in the papers, they said they could help ensure that there would be no fraud and cheating. Maybe that is how they think they can influence a peaceful and orderly elections."

"What's important is that they kindred generals know what is wrong and what is right. So we just hope that it will not contribute to any destabilization," Ermita said.

Palace chides Erap over protest threats

By Cil Cabacungan Jr.

[illegible]

The new Malacañang message to deposed President Estrada following reports he had urged his loyal supporters to join protest actions of the opposition against allegations of massive cheating in the elections by the administration.

Although Presidential campaign spokesperson Michael Defensor said Estrada, the coalition adviser, former Cabinet Sec. Mary Mercedes Alcuaz had denied the report, he said the government was treating it as a serious matter since the former President still commanded the support of 30 percent of the public.

Estrada was reported to have ordered his loyalist hardly follow in the streets Post...it is said for the masses to rally against what he insinuated as the administration's concerns in manipulating the outcome of the elections to favor of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Added Presidential Spokesperson Ignacio Bunye: "We call on former President Estrada and his allies to stop making irresponsible statements that can fuel more tensions."

Bunye, however, refused to comment on whether Malacañang believed Estrada could still bring together the same forces that stormed the Palace on Labor Day in 2001.

FIGHTS (left) shoots and makes the game-winning shot as the Lakers' new Eliasbili.

Lakers steal game on Fisher jumper

SAN ANTONIO, Texas—San Antonio's Tim Duncan made an impossible shot, but Derek Fisher answered for the Los Angeles Lakers with an improbable one.

Fisher's remarkable fadeaway jumper at the buzzer gave Los Angeles a 74-73 victory over the Spurs that may have tilted the National Basketball Association's balance of power back in the Lakers' favor.

In a highly anticipated showdown of the teams that have won the last five NBA titles, the Lakers stole the pivotal fifth game of the Western Conference semifinals taking a 3-2 lead to the best-of-seven series.

They are one win from reversing the series and dethroning the Spurs, who did the same to them a year ago.

However, the Lakers seemed light years from doing that after Duncan made perhaps the greatest shot of his stellar career—a fadeaway 16-footer off the dribble over Shaquille O'Neal with two tenths of a second left that gave the Spurs a 73-71 lead and drove the SBC Center into bedlam.

"I couldn't believe it went in," Duncan said. "They played the dribble handoff great. I let it go as high as I could, knowing that Shaq was there."

Through a series of false starts and timeouts, the Spurs were blundering superstars O'Neal and Robo Stojakl. Tony Parker was forced to inbound to Fisher, who came to the sideline and in one motion turned and fired a jumper just before the buzzer over Manu Ginobili that splashed through, stunning the Spurs and their fans into silence.

"Unbelievable, incredible," Duncan said. "There's not much you can say about it." "You dream about that growing up," said Fisher, who said he believed the Lakers had time to get one shot and shot off with four months left but admitted difficulty when he saw the clock late, giving Parker extra time to shoot, and the team planned to lodge a protest.

The Lakers will have a chance to close out the series at home Saturday.

A FRUSTRATED Duncan walks off the court after the heartbreaking loss.

HAMBURG MASTERS

Federer-Moya blockbuster q'final

HAMBURG, Germany—World No. 3 Roger Federer isn't fazed by having to face Carlos Moya in a mouthwatering quarterfinal at the Hamburg Masters on Friday.

Federer holds a 3-0 record against Moya, but it'll be the first time they've met on clay. The No. 8-ranked Spaniard has won nine straight matches, including last week's Italian Open, and is an ATP-best 24-4 on dirt this season.

"It doesn't matter where I will play on clay in the long as my level is all right," Federer said. "I consider myself to be a clay-court specialist as well, otherwise I wouldn't have won tournaments like Munich and Hamburg and the Masters in Rome and the Davis Cup matches. I know how good I am."

Federer won Hamburg in 2002, and beat 11th-seeded Fernando Gonzalez of Chile, 7-5, 6-1, in the third round on Thursday.

Moya reached a toughest test against countryman Fernando Verdasco, 6-4, 3-6, 6-4, to set up his showdown with Federer.

"I know it's on clay but he won here two years ago which I never did," Moya said.

In the other quarterfinals, defending champion Guillermo Coria of Argentina plays Juan Carlos Ferrer of Spain, 17th-seeded Dominik Hrbaty meets the surprising Juergen Melzer of Austria, and Ivan Ljubicic of Croatia tackles Mikhail Youzhny of Russia.

Second seeded Coria beat Tommy Robredo of Spain, 7-6 (2), 6-4, and extended his winning streak on clay to 29... which includes two wins over Ferrer—since the semifinals of the 2003 French Open. AP

FEDERER celebrates his victory.

New team for Holyfield

DARIEN, Georgia—Relaxing in a brown leather chair in his colonial suburban Atlanta mansion, Evander Holyfield is within arm's reach of a book about the man who defined the sport of boxing in Holyfield's youth.

The image of Muhammad Ali on the cover of "Glory" prominently displayed on an easel, commands attention even in the expansive living room of Holyfield's office.

Ali looks tired and slightly pained as he holds his head in his hands. Holyfield, the only man to win the heavyweight title four times, appears similarly drained as he explains why he is optimistic about his boxing future when so many say it's time for the 41-year-old fighter to retire.

"I want them to know the most important thing is I have to do what I believe I should do," Holyfield said. "That's the point of being a man. You live through the decision you think will work for you. You've got to go see eye to eye what you believe."

He has won only two of his last eight fights, and isn't listed as a top contender in three major rankings. Only the WBA lists Holyfield highly at No. 11. AP

Diaz captures lightweight title

SAN DIEGO, California—Mexican-American Julio Diaz captured the International Boxing Federation lightweight title on Thursday with a 12-round majority decision over Mexico's Javier Jauregui.

Diaz outboxed Jauregui, although the champion did land some solid shots in the latter stages. Two judges scored it 118-110 for Diaz, while the third called it 114-114.

Diaz, a former Olympian, had captured the title by stopping American Leonardo Johnson. AFP

Draws

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

DRAWS normally happen only in chess. That's because a draw in chess matters much: it gives both protagonists half a point each. In chess, only a draw announces a new in the latter, with the winner earning a big one point.

Thus, virtually in all other sports, there's no such thing as a draw.

In tennis, a tied match is broken by a tiebreak.

In golf, a tie is broken by a sudden-death playoff.

In basketball, a tied score after the regulation period is broken by a five-minute extension. If the game is still tied after that, another five minutes is used to break the tie—and so on and so forth.

Rarely do we have a dead-heat in team racing (water racing, cycling marathons, canoeing events, even swimming. Usually, in these sports, we see a "victory by a nose." The dead-heat result is an accident or a lame subject. It is happen at all, both protagonists each win a gold medal.

In boxing, the draw is the most dreaded of all results. That's as far as the challenger is concerned because he loses the fight outright.

A draw in boxing is not broken by the addition of more rounds; the fight simply ends there and it allows the defending champion to retain his crown.

Sometimes, the challenger feels better if he sees himself the loser rather than get a draw when all indications point to him as the winner.

I cite here once more the case of Manny Pacquiao, who was the winner over defending champion Juan Manuel Marquez of Mexico last Sunday over only by Pacquiao's sour boxing estimation but also in the eyes of a public steeped in the laws and ways of boxing. But as fine would have it, Pacquiao only earned a draw after 12 rounds, the verdict immediately reflecting a howl of protests.

Draws are the most unexpected results in boxing. That's why each time a draw is announced, you will most likely hear boos from the crowd, as in Pacquiao's last fight. Always, the crowd smells something fishy seeing a fight end in a draw.

Draws are more of a bane than boon to boxing. The records in boxing are intelligent and there is little wiggle room when they bear ties, not one such as a draw.

I am still amazed why, despite the invention of the laptop and cell phone, draws are still allowed in boxing.

You see, the referee is empowered to order both boxers to ring it out if he sees, feels, that both fighters are not slugging it out as expected by the rules of the sport. This move is less serious you of a fight not ending in a draw. The referee can even declare a no-contest if he feels that both fighters are not giving enough of their best shots.

Now if referees have such power, why not also declare the three fight judges with the same powers? To cheer, why not make it mandatory for each judge to declare one boxer winner of every round? In short, eliminate the rule of scoring a round a draw so that if the fight has the distance, the fight will have a sure winner on points.

People watch fights to enjoy. The climax of the show is to see, know, the winner. A draw destroys everything.

When the Pacquiao-Marquez fight was declared a draw, many were disappointed. In the place where I watched the fight on TV—after having sat tired the ugly barrage of commercials that stretched the fight to a six-hour instant—the crowd I was with hollered in anger after hearing the draw verdict. Many of them, piqued needlessly by the result, tried to defy the figure but it was the day before election day) and searched for beer to go to the neighborhood store.

Before Sunday's clamor draw result, there had been many controversial draws that somehow tainted the image of boxing. Lewis-Holyfield in 1999 and Whitaker-Chavez in 1993 were last two disappointing draws that further smeared the sanctity of the sport.

Sunday's controversial fight in Las Vegas will no doubt join the immortal list of boxing harmless.

We oppose Pacquiao give him a rematch. The public, too, will love to see that happen. This can be done through the political will of both the IBF and WBA. Otherwise, without a rematch, boxing will continue to remain burdened with its dubious tag as—in the words of Jimmy Cannon—the sad light theater of sports.

It's a shoulder-tight that's been there for decades.

SPORTSWATCH

Stoudemire to be invited to US squad

NEW YORK—Amare Stoudemire of the Phoenix Suns will be invited to play for the US Olympic team's basketball team, becoming the latest addition to a constantly changing and younger roster, two USA Basketball sources said. The sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, told The Associated Press that Stoudemire, the NBA Rookie of the Year in 2002-03, will be asked to play in Athens. The decision is made Sunday when the team is announced by ESPN.com. The 21-year-old joins LeBron James, Stephon Marbury and Shawn Marion as the newest additions to an American team that will be without many of the top players originally selected to workout: Kareem Rashad Shaq Neal, Jason Kidd, Tim Duncan and Allen Iverson. Stoudemire was one of the first two Jersey Nets told reporters on Wednesday that he would not be willing to accept an invitation, citing a lingering knee injury and his unsettled contract status as can upcoming restricted free agent. AP

Patrimonio gains age-group finals

TARIO sand Christine Patrimonio bergained to the girls' 14 under finals after sending a 6-0, 6-0 victory over fifth seed Jasmine Mendoza yesterday in the Phillip Glenn 12 Age Group Championships at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center. Christine, one of three tennis-playing children of Pureheads Jaspe Boris, will meet second seed Thalia Dalisay, who dropped past fourth seed Jamie Bonifacio, 6-4, 6-0. Playing on the girls' 12 under finals were third seed Angelica Santiago, who eliminated top seed Sarah Jane Lim, 6-4, 6-4, and host Ilo seed Sally Mae Soto, who ousted second seed Joan Therese Gualberto, 6-1, 6-3. Also survived second seed Tito Pedero, 6-4, 6-1, 6-0.

Plantel Tennis Club prevails

INGLEWOOD Joseph Dagara partnered Brad Mau to victory as Plantel Tennis Club finished Batulay in the 35-year-old men's doubles category of the inaugural Bulacan Inter-Town Tennis Tournament at Malolos City. The victory of Dagara, a former nationally ranked junior player, and Mau was one of the two wins won by Plantel in the entire tournament. Plantel also had Batulay in two rubbers. Dagara and Mau won 7-6 (7-5) match with a 10-3 win over Pulilan in the Men's Open division. Tai Reyes and Baby Pineda completed Team Plantel's victory with a 10-3 romp over Hagonoy in the 60 over doubles category.

FOREST INVITATIONAL WINNERS

Mar de Guzman (third from right) and guest partner Bj Pedralbo accept their trophies after topping the 3rd Forest Hills Golf Club Invitational last Sunday. With them are Forest Hills chair Jeanne Ferdinand Sanez, Anthony Sunny, Regina Talentino, and sports and games committee chair Victor de Guzman.

IT'S GO FOR CEBU

National Basketball Conference secretary general Tito Palma, Cebu Basketball Federation president and Tiliong Sugbo team owner Lito Gilbanar and NBC chair Louie Bisnar (from left) put their hands together after the Cebuanos confirmed their participation in the NBC national championship which converges soon in Cagayan de Oro City. Seven other teams, including Spring Cooking Oil-Laguna, are vying in the cagefest sponsored by Panasonic and Talpisin Lites.

DAVRIT

RP Olympians to receive $2,500 grant

FILIPINO athletes who qualified in the Athens Olympics will get additional training stipends of $2,500 each from the Philippine Olympic Committee and the Olympic Solidarity.

"The amount may not be big, but it will definitely help our athletes prepare for the Athens Olympics," POC president Cojuangco Jr. said yesterday.

Those who will receive the scholarship grants are swimmers Miguel Molina and Miguel Molina, archer Jasmin Figueroa, track and field stars Edwards Buntarista and Lerma Balanzion Gitinin, boxers Pedro Dapia, Christopher Cornes, Romeo Brin and Rusty Tabalasa, trap shooter JoAnn Dionisio and taekwondo jins Donald Geisler III, Edmundo Go and Mary Antoinette Rivero.

The athletes will receive the financial assistance through their respective National Sports Associations (NSA).

According to Davrit, the limited scholarship program was developed by the Olympic Solidarity to help various NOCs from five continents.

Although not all scholarship holders participated in the games, the results were significantly positive as seen in Atlanta in 1996 when 18 of 200 athletes won Olympic medals and in Sydney in 2000 when 63 of 476 athletes bagged 70 medals.

Seventeen Asian NOCs received grants in 1996 while 19 NOCs were benefited in 2000.

Boxer George Barcelona archer Jennifer Chan and wrestler Melchor Tumaon were the first three Filipino recipients of the grant.

Montaña, Blustar face varsity teams

STANDINGS	W	L
Vito	6	1
Welteat	6	2
Swedish-IST	4	3
Legaia	4	3
Montaña	4	3
Blustar	4	3
La Fiesta Alonso	2	4
Topdot Lotion	2	5

GAMES TODAY (Quezon Coliseum)
2 p.m. — Swedish-IST vs. La Fiesta Alonso
4 p.m. — Topdot Lotion vs. Blustar

By Trina Rocio

MONTAÑA and Blustar clash against separate collegiate foes at the Lorenz gym today looking to move a step closer toward a twice-to-beat privilege in the first round of the PBL Unity Cup quarterfinals.

The Jewels battle Lee Pipes-Asiatech at 2 p.m., while the Generoso Ritzs square off with Topdot Lotion at 4 p.m., seeking wins that would give them at least two bo wins in the upper half of the draw.

As things stand, both Montaña and Blustar are tied for third spot with idle Swedish-IST and defending champion Vitaco with 4-3 cards. Vito (6-1) and Welteat (6-2) are the only teams assured of spots in the semifinals.

Tournament format calls for the Nos. 3 and 4 teams to face Nos. 5 and 6 only once to march on to the Final Four, and losses today could even derail Montaña and Blustar from advancing.

Wins, however, would give them 5-3 records, something either the Swift Spotliters or the Tigers would have after they clash on Tuesday while ousting the Eagles and the Knights from further contention.

Should the Eagles and the Knights prevail on the other hand, it would create a five-team logjam for the top two spots after the elims among all six of the teams seeing action today and the winner of the Super Stallion match.

The Knights will be coming to battle pain with a four-game losing streak. But home court advantage could help them re-fashion any a repeat of their 77-68 victory over Blustar on April 11.

Antonio, players file complaint vs NCFP

GRANDMASTER Joey Antonio led a group of players and arbiters in filing a complaint at the National Bureau of Investigation on Thursday against the National Chess Federation of the Philippines (NCFP) for alleged falsification of documents.

Named in the complaint were NCFP secretary general Jimmy Balsmo and former treasurer Jeanne Corie Polistico.

Antonio and Polistico allegedly falsified the NCFP liquidation report submitted to the Philippine Sports Commission, which stated that P1,128,000 in assistance was given to the NCFP in 2002.

In the report dated Aug. 28, 2002, members of the national team that competed in the 2002 World Class Olympiad in Bled, Slovenia, reportedly got P90,000 as training allowance for the event, with cheks respective signatures contained in the document.

However, Antonio, fellow GM Joey Villamayor, International Masters Nelson Mariano II and Warner Hide Master Bernie Joy Lumbres, who all competed in the Bled event, filed affidavits stating they did not receive a single centavo of the allowance.

Antonio said Villamayor also swore that the signatures in the liquidation report were not theirs.

Joining Antonio in the NBI were Mariano, international arbiter Rolando Tiatco and national arbiters Roberto "Bobby" Bautista and Joey Manarna.

Polistico, Bautista and Mariano were also named in the liquidation report submitted by the NCFP in which a stated P170,000 of the PSC assistance were to honorarium for their services as technical staff to the Women's Chess Championship held March 10 to May 6 of the same year.

Bautista, who issued the sworn statement on behalf of the group, said he only received P10,000 from the NCFP. P5,000 short of the amount indicated in the liquidation report.

Bautista said the signature on the paper was also not his. "I presumed my signature was forged," he said.

Bautista believed that Tiatco may have had a hand in the falsified document.

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Probing Proberz

IF Eddie Gil were to create a survey firm of his own, in order to cite polling numbers in his favor, the result would be very much like the mysterious Proberz research and consultancy group. The firm's equivalent of Gil's giveaway toojee would be the mid-de-2 at the end of the company name. The equivalent of Gil's sweeping promises would be the laughable assumptions behind the firm's exit poll.

EDITORIAL For reasons we shall show, the methodology the company used for its exit poll was seriously flawed. This means that its exit poll cannot be taken seriously; by implication, neither can its first survey, which like a piece of meat was thrown on to the track just as the race entered the home stretch.

If Proberz is the best that opposition presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr. can rely on, in his campaign's obvious attempt to counter the surveys of Pulse Asia and Social Weather Stations with some numbers of its own, then he and his merry men need to spend more time looking for evidence of election fraud, or manufacturing it.

What was wrong with the Proberz exit poll? Plenty, if one were to go by the press briefing Proberz executive director Alfredo Sierra and two senior researchers conducted the other day.

First, the field numbers don't look right. Sierra said that on the day of the election, a group of 118 Proberz field researchers interviewed 4,000 respondents. The interviews took place between 8 a.m. and 12 noon (because, Sierra said, three-fourths of all voters traditionally vote at this time). Assuming that the work was divided evenly, Proberz's deployment of resources means that each researcher interviewed some 36 respondents, or an eyebrow-raising average of nine per hour. (Field researchers don't only ask the questions; they also qualify the respondents, a time-consuming task.)

But unaccountably, given the nature of the job, the researchers were not told to start as early as they could. As a result, Sierra admitted, most of the interviewers started their research at 11 a.m. This means that most of them interviewed as many as 36 respondents in one hour. Considering that the Proberz exit poll was conducted not only outside polling places but also in the respondents' homes, Proberz's field research objective seem all but physically impossible to meet.

Contrast this with the SWS exit poll, also conducted on election day. At least 7,200 interviews were conducted, but by 1,200 staff members, and in nine hours (from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.).

Second, Proberz's main assumption is unrealistic. The firm limited its field research mostly to urban areas, the cities and provincial capitals. Its reasons: the voting populations in the urban areas of a given province is greater than that in the rest of the province.

This is an astonishing assumption. While it may be true of certain provinces, it cannot be true for all. Just to cite one example, Tacloban City has only 90,000 voters, while the entire province of Leyte has 908,000 voters.

Sierra also admitted that, because of deadline pressure, "smaller provinces" were excluded. While all regions were sampled, the most Proberz could say was that most of the big provinces in each region were included in the poll.

Granting that Proberz did actually conduct a nationwide exit poll, its methodology leads to only one conclusion: it represents only half a nation.

Third, Proberz practiced no notion of random sampling under selectively. Sierra admitted that those prospective respondents who said they did not vote for any presidential candidate were not included in the survey, for unexplained why some of those who did not cast a vote for vice president were.

Aside from these erroneous assumptions, the Proberz exit poll is also certainly mistaken about one result: its roster of winning senatorial candidates. The list for the first 16 slots conspicuously lacks one name that has consistently appeared in the top 6 of all the surveys: Aquilino Pimentel. It also excluded two consistent survey performers or outside the circle of the Magic 12: Richard Gordon and Miriam Defensor-Santiago. In their stead is Ernesto Maceda, a consistent borderline candidate in the SWS and Pulse Asia surveys.

Like Gil, a caricature of a presidential candidate, the Proberz election-day survey is a cartoonish exit poll. It's good for a laugh, but not much more.

Shallow elections

SEPARATE OPINION

Fabian S. Cruz

THE ELECTIONS just concluded were, in my opinion, the worst ever since we became a republic. They were blemished by the usual vices of elections in this country, like vote-buying, flying voters, terrorism and shoddy canvass, but I am not talking of these vices right now. I am referring to an even more grievous flaw of the 2004 elections that made them *not genuine*, in a theoretical sense by themselves.

Elections before invested one-on-one confrontations between the nominees of only two major contending parties, the Nacionalistas and the Liberals. The candidates of these parties and established political leaders against each other, like Osmeña's Bosse in 1946, Quirino's Laurel in 1949, Garcia's Velo in 1957, Macapagal's Garcia in 1962, and Marcos's Macapagal in 1965. There were exceptions, as when Jose Avelino joined the fight in 1949 and Manuel Manahan and Cleto de Borja took part in 1957. But they were only minor distractions in the contest between the heavyweights of the two dominant parties. Raoul Isaac wryly said, "I know I was going to lose, but I did not know it was going to be a disaster."

By contrast, the presidential elections this year were inferior in nature compared to their more prestigious predecessors. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was only an accidental President who defeated her high official rank and political status in top of charges that she was using government resources to advance her campaign. Fernando Poe Jr., who had no political experience and was a high-school dropout, was mocked for his cowardice in not meeting his challenger to a debate, which he evasively called "stratehiya."

Raul Roco had impressive credentials but lost much support because of his poor health and the lack of a similar party and a running mate with national prominence like Noli de Castro and Loren Legarda. Panfilo Lacson, also a political novice, was facing criminal charges of murder and other offenses and had no running mate and only one senatorial candidate. The last "also-ran" was Eddie Villanueva, who bestowed his 2 million evangelical flock would support him although he had no true commitment or even a single senatorial candidate.

The list of nonsensical arguments was also for Jesus, at least, respectable. How could conservative citizens support such promiscuous actors like Rene Revilla, Leo Lapid and Jinggoy Estrada as members of a Senate which once sat illustrious leaders like Manuel Quezon, Sergio Osmeña, Claro M. Recto, Jose P. Laurel, Jose Rizal-ino, Lorenzo Tañada and Jovito R. Salonga?

Sensibly, both the senatorial slates of UNO and PPC were formed by not only those key leaders of the party-created but also candidates identified with the deposed Joseph Estrada administration, such as Vice President Noli, Juan Ponce Enrile, Alfredo Lim, Miriam Defensor-Santiago and Didi Mercado, all of them elements from the 2001 elections, plus John Osmeña, Aurora Aquino and Delagon Gloriapatas. A forgetful electorate made some of them win.

In the past, when the Nacionalistas and Liberals held their presidential/vice-presidential tickets to the electorate, many voters often thought it difficult to accommodate all their choices for only 12 spaces in the ballot because most of the candidates were qualified and deserving. There was less a single actor in what the parties called their "presidential" slates, which included leaders in business, education, labor, women's groups, the armed forces, and other sectors.

The last elections saw no serious discussion of issues like, for example, when the Liberal Party proposed Nacky in 1987 and the Nacionalista Party vigorously opposed it. The issued of the 2004 campaign was entertainment.

Actions emitted outcroppings free for stirring the crowd with their performances while the candidates simply displayed themselves as if they had nothing worthwhile to say. Some of them actually joined the entertainers. The President Macapagal herself who donned rubber boots and waded in the mud to show her support to the indigenous people. Actor Joe Ed did not have to resort to the tones but played the role of the competent candidate by assuming his remarks like a knowledgeable thinker.

I earnestly pray that future elections in this country will not be as crushed as the elections we just had. The people deserved better than the repetitive carnival of lifestyles that besieged them for lack of the serious ideas the candidates should have offered to solve the problems of the country. That also senatus could also have proved their competence in the solutions of the many pressing problems and avoided the selection of short cuts as alibis in the solemn councils of the government.

Signs of unholy designs

GET REAL

Sedfrie Cullao-Monsod

BUT wasn't a serious fear that there was going to be cheating and that the cheating obvious that? Wasn't it obvious that the margin was being set for thwarting, either deliberately or unwittingly? We would have to be dead, dumb and blind not to see it.

First, there was the attempt to use automated counting machines that were vulnerable to intervention by those who programmed the system, supposedly for the electronic data transmission phase, but which also means that if the machines could communicate outward, it could also receive instructions). The Supreme Court put "paid" to that, thanks to the dogged persistence of Sen. Lagman and his computer colleagues, all of whom can be considered among the heroes of these elections. At least, the potential for influencing the results of the elections from that quarter was eliminated.

Unfortunately there were other possible ways to do that.

There was the suspension of the continuing voter registration system for six months, and its premature termination. The suspension was supposedly to implement the so-called Voter Validation System, where registered voters were being asked to register again so that they could get their ballots, only to discover (like what happened to Sen. Lagman) that their names had been left out in the first place. That the VVS failed badly 20 percent of registered voters were validated, per Comelec estimates, in spite of initial denials by Chair Benjamin Abalos that voters who did not validate may not be able to vote), was an ill omen as to implementation. Still it is more difficult for most voters to register, underscores the rock-cast priorities of the Comelec leadership.

Then there was Abalos' statement on during his own quick count (in a run of 9000 ballots), even as the Comelec had already accredited Namfrel, with the greatest reluctance, and only after public pressure for it to do so (at no cost to the government). In fairness to the rest of the commission, I understand that four of the seven members either objected or had reservations about that Comelec push count, but it seem through anyway, until the Supreme Court struck it down. But the preparations for this project, to which Comelec field officers objected unanimously, diverted the Comelec's time and resources from its more basic role of monitoring, education, information and logistical preparations.

At the same time that some voters were being disenfranchised even before the elections, there are also instances that there were a padding of the voters' lists. Statistically, the proportion of the voting population (18 years old and above) who actually register runs between 80 and 85 percent. That, if the voting population, per census estimates, for the 2004 elections is 49 million, one would expect from past experience that the number of registered voters would be anywhere from 39.2 to 41.7 million voters. Yet Comelec figures show 43.3 million. An increase in over 4mm spots? Or padded lists?

But even if the lists were padded, it would not necessarily result in fraud. As I argued last year, the overriding principle is not vote-counting, but registration, for one voter, one vote. Inasmuch "flying voters" would be unable to vote more than once, as long as indelible ink was applied to their fingers, and as long as the indelible ink was really indelible. But there's one rub, as Counsel de Quiros would say. The Comelec inadvertently seems to have a penchant for awarding contracts to questionable contractors who don't deliver what is required.

Then, there were the voters' lists themselves. By law, these should have been posted in every municipality or city by early February to allow 90 days for inclusion and correction (something that was not done). Political parties, or watchful organizations to remove fictitious names, double registrants, etc. But, you guessed it, many voters' lists, which for some complicated reason, the Comelec leadership decided should be generated from the main office and not per precinct as before, and the 400-plus pages back to the Comelec field offices in late January. Result? Delays, confusion, no time for inclusion and exclusion proceedings.

The latest, of course, was the appointment of the Comelec of two commissioners whose constitutional fitness for the integrity were questionable, to say the least. Their first official act was to petition the Supreme Court to disqualify Fernando Poe Jr. The transmittal of that letter was marked only by the paucity of valid legal arguments, to which the Supreme Court just summarily denied a writ. The point is that if they would act with such efficiency and lack of legal basis, on the issue of Poe's citizenship, what other misdeeds could they be capable of?

Which is why, if Chairs Benjamin Abalos is a designed with complaints about the Comelec leadership and suspicions of their incompetence or their partisanship, the only has herself to blame. She appointed them in the first place.

All the signs were there. By some of the past, that she was not considering eligible men was to have done anything about it, the way Lagman did. And now, instead of guarding the remaining (where "display fouls" takes place) with their lives, they insist on blaming the exit polls (the irony of it all is that 1992 Michael Mangahas in Pat's Bite would), and we remember (e.g., Ed Tiaoul, in a report that he did in 1992), wanting to kill the messengers for delivering bad news. Which shows the quality of their thinking. And probably why they lose.

We get the government we deserve.

KNP's game plan

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cannasan

[illegible] Cardinal Vidal, archbishop of Cebu, was quoted in local media saying many here in attendance which claimed that he had signed an agreement with the opposition to pursue charges and cheating by the administration. As it turns out, the Cebu Archbishop Emeritus explained to the media, Senator Marcos supporter Bong Revilla's campaign manager and very close, spokesperson for Eddie Villanueva, flew to Cebu last Wednesday in an effort to entice the cardinal to the opposition's camp. Cardinal Vidal, prior to coming close to allegations of massive cheating, flew the issue hatred private study refused to sign the agreement. Instead he admonished Senator and Gloria to document the charges as those could be properly acted upon.

* * *

As all voters know, cheating has been done in every election by various political groups. Even the PDP Laban in the 1992 and 1995 polls. In those City last Wednesday night, people were confused with a comment, who is behind? Affiliated with the group of Mayor Peewee Trivino, a Nacionalista Party member, were reported to work with several Eddie boys known in their vehicles. Surely, they weren't cheating for K-4.

* * *

Admittedly deserting a many campaign on the local level where he has placed Gloria's goodbye at stake at 10 runs. But whether cheating is a functional administrational policy can be figuratively disputed. Moreover, as one observer has noted, cheating is not the only reason why Gloria's candidate got into the opposition, misused at time and are expected to be spoken up in Mindanao.

One person whose been credited above cheating is Archbishop Antipas Pantaleon Arguelles Tiongson, also known as Jaypee Soweto as the tall end of the Magic 12. Could that be why he's sounding the call on being down the administration? But as many possible have pointed out, the darker against Bong gets could come from Erap's allies hereabouts.

* * *

What seems obvious is that ESP is following a script whereby it sounds charge cheating as evidence to be presented in election protest in the reality that the popular FPJ could lose the elections. In this script, some retired generals, recently identified with the late dictator, have a role in destabilization strategies. Note that ESP uses dangling "wrangling" the day after the elections, as a time when FPJ was leading in various unfinished. When GMA stunned FPJ, ESP changed its tune and began dangling shocking and killing of elections, and accusing the Comelec, Namfrel, the automatic and PPCRV about being engaged in a "conspiracy." The line is that the PPCRV, NAMFREL and poll, the ABS-CBN poll, the SWS/Namfrel/ABS poll and the Ideals in Cebu's June 23 poll all said the same things posted a fifth.

* * *

What ESP doesn't say is that FPJ took an early lead in the tabulation because of the votes from Luzon where he was in many places. But now that the Visayas and Mindanao votes like Cebu have come in, FPJ's early lead is cut and Gloria's lead is narrowing. It's interesting that in Luzon, FPJ's winning margins were not that wide, whereas in the Visayas, GMA is winning by a landslide in some provinces. Take for example in Western Visayas. In Leyte, FPJ was on the losing side but GMA won on the Comelec tally by about 40,000 votes.

* * *

By now, ESP's confident tones which aids most when they don't to still in subconscious, covering that up with allegations of rampant cheating. In the meantime, GMA has to contend the business of governing, holding her first post-election Cabinet meeting yesterday even as she's reportedly trying to reach out to key various opponents through third parties. She went from the perspective that she's also trailing Cabinet to ready in the next few weeks.

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* * *

There were many spots in these elections in [illegible] where complete rogues and professional knuckleheads, political neophytes and the pet of former Gov. Leopoldo Bello and dare-serve Gov. and now congresswoman-elect Bernadine Bello, lost former Rep. Sergio Apostol by more than 30,000 votes. My friend, since now Rep. Gary Espina, ran by only 40 votes in the race for mayor of Naval, Biliran's capital, even as true evidence of his was the gunrunning-and-riot-and-house war. Another friend, Rep. Eddy Villanueva, lost his own provincial seat to failure to former Rep. Pedro Trivino in Quezon City, it was a triple whammy for the Monfoys. The loss of former mayor and backing to re-election of Mayor Sonny Belmonte, and the loss of Bong Mendoza, Rep. Chiz Escudero's top councilor Ana Bonaobra and another son by having to the council seat.

* * *

In Eastern Samar, I rejoice over the victories of our models colleague Ben Evardone as governor, even as I mourn the defeat of Senior Rep. Ed Sumbana, a leading light of the Chavez group, who ran against the Rep. Ben Evardone, Rep. Carolino Figueroa. The talk is that while Sechico was busy promoting Chavez' change in Manila, Figueroa, who lost in his own backyard, was busy doing the dirty work of the corruptions of the administration. Figueroa's boys were working on the barangay captains, in hustings, festivals, how organized barbel theatre fans. Sensate, to defend incumbent Mayor Rodge Mercado and to lower with organized [illegible] and gave to rivals Conee Padaca to defeat a member of the ruling dynasty, Beatrice Ty Jr. in the gubernatorial race.

* * *

In yesterday's issue of Today, Senator Joel Reyes lamenting and that a "tainted boy friend" of GMA, defeated gubernatorial candidate in Bulacan, Fernando Pores, manoeuvred to get millions in the pre-election. Joel Mark Llamas, which he said, was contributed by another "tainted boy friend" of GMA, defeated Bulacan Representative Villarosa. And in the same newspaper lamenting at an overwhelmingly reverend to GMA's home that she has "surrounded herself with tainted friends." That one could be young, critical long, not a hallmark of a refined learned graduate.

A chance at salvation

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

Undoubtedly—and I must acknowledge this—with the sudden growing awareness internationally of what the virus Aids wrought, we will all make increasing efforts to rally to the side of women. It's unlikely, however, that we will make more progress over the next five years than we have made in the past 20. But I cannot emphasize strongly enough that the interests and wishes which plague our response are inadequate, if not downright harmful, and at this desperate race against time we will continue to lose vast numbers of women.

That is not to suggest for a moment that we shouldn't make every conceivable effort to care for Aids, it is only to acknowledge the possible mistakes that we're going to make.

Despite say to me: Stephen, what about the men? We have to start with the men. Of course we do. But please recognize that it's going to take generations to change gendered male values and behavior, and by that time, we'll have lost countless more.

Time is not on our side. Something dramatic has to happen within years the talk of generations into more measures in the passage of time.

* * *

And true, ladies and gentlemen, to where all of you come in. I'm not pretending that microbicides are a magic bullet. Microbicides aren't a vaccine, but do I digress the powerful pills made by Dena San Gupta in the opening of the conference, that microbicides "change the environment" so that existing cultural changes so urgently required. But what so many interventions have failed, where the landscape for women is so bleak, the prospect of a microbicide is like an oasis in a parched, treacherous desert.

The idea that women will have a way of treating ourselves from Aids—that we can do this also—has left us able to defend their bodily health, the idea that women will have a course of prevention to defend which results in saving their lives, the idea that women may have a microbicide which prevents infection but absent the knowledge, the idea that women can use microbicides without bowing to male decision—indeed the idea that men will not even know the microbicide is in use... these are ideas whose time has come.

* * *

With all of my adult life, I have felt that the struggle for gender equality is the toughest struggle of all, and precisely for that reason I have [illegible] **in the battle against HIV/AIDS. The women of Africa and beyond: they run the household, they given the food, their incomes virtually the entire burden of care, they look after the orphans and the sick, they are the most unimaginable workers, and to encompass for a life of almost supernatural hardship and devotion, they die anyway.**

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* * *

With me, while microbicides are not a salvation, they count as close to salvation as anything else I've heard about. I pray that everyone at this conference understands that the women of Africa and many other parts of the world are counting on you. For their sakes, we must never lose sight of the discovery of a microbicide. If we were making progress on several other fronts, microbicides would pale. But we're not making progress in such [illegible] **areas, and we're making progress in such** [illegible] **areas, that it feels as though we're moving from gradient to impossible. The consensus of the international community should flow irreversibly into the hands of the scientists and researchers and advocates and activists assembled here who fight the good fight, because we're going to need it.**

I admit: I have a positive bar hyperbolic. It's a monotonic disability, with one exception. The **subject is the exception. I don't know how or** [illegible] **to you what's happening out there. I** [illegible] **from country to country, from rural bitterness to urban despair, from optimism to** [illegible], **and everywhere I go the lives of women are compromised. And it's not changing, how do you get governments and international financial institutions and bilateral development agencies to participate? It's not changing. Three microbicide years, and women have taken exactly what they faced in yesteryear and yesteryear before that.** (Conclusion tomorrow)

About Enrique

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L. Harper

THERE have been claims that Enrique de Malacca (as he is listed in the Seville archives and in the chronicles of that historic journey) was actually a native of Cebu. This conclusion may have arisen because Enrique's name is also given as Henry. But he was an Amerindian Slave, having been born in Sumatra, according to Antonio de Pigafetta's small account, and not one that was alive a week in Homonhon, Magellan left his three ships headed southwest, sailing into the Pacific Ocean. The following day they saw an island and as they approached, a small boat with warriors came to greet them.

Enrique "understood them in a Malay dialect, which is a very common language in the Indies," Pigafetta wrote. Enrique was overjoyed to understand him and explained to the sailor tongue. Because, not even Magellan knew how his slave managed to converse with the islanders..." Whether this was Cebuano or a language used by traders in several archipelagos, this conversation was still seven leagues What we have is a supposition. It is a matter of record that Magellan bought Enrique "in seven months in Malacca, where he was captured, from a certain Malayan who used to trade with Java." He could have come from the Philippine archipelago, having been captured as a child by Muslim raiders and sold to the slave trade. Whether he was originally from here or from another country, he was a key factor in the process of having the first circumnavigation of the globe.

Magellan, on the other hand, was like one of those tragic heroes only found first in his characters. Born in Portugal, he was a nobleman of the royal court but quarrelled with the king and left for Spain. Here he was given command of a fleet to find a route to the Spice Islands. He could not have gone

Lessons from Pacquiao fight

THE PACQUIAO-MARQUEZ title fight reaches some valuable lessons applicable to the just-concluded presidential election.

1. It's not how young you start but how well you finish that spells the difference between a victory a defeat or a draw. "People's champ" Manny Pacquiao came out like a raging bull, knocking down the ex-defender, Juan Miguel Marquez, three times in the first round. But from the second round till the 12th, Marquez more than held his own with offensive counters and solid punches to negate the champion's power. Conversely, former boxer, Raul Boy-Castro ran on top of many surveys, but your bet is now competing for last position with Sen. Edcle Villanueva.

2. Too much advertising mirrors has given maximum result. The boxing TV spectat was overloaded with commercials. While only a maximum of five minutes per gap is allowed by the Advertising Board, last Sunday's program had an average of 17 minutes per gap or an overload of 240 minutes. This was just plain abuse on the part of the blank letter and the current network. Historically, by sheer volume and repetition, the poor viewers couldn't help but to remember the ads. Among the traditional media, television rules. You could explain: why will Sen. Edcle Villanueva, Sen. Raul Roco, Sen. Francisco Tatad, Jamby Madrigal are doing well. (The endorsement of Judge obviously did not have blindsigal, either.) Their ads may not win awards (as compared to the inspiring ads of Sen. Noynoy) but they obviously connected with the masses.

3. In boxing, as in Philippine politics, there are only the winners and the cheated. "Manny should have become the new undisputed featherweight champion of the world if only one of the judges scored it like the other nine (114) or the first round." Never mind that the supervisor of the fight ruled it was a judgment call and elsewhere cameras he canvassed. Never mind that Pacquiao failed to finish off Marquez (as it seemed) he injured his other left hand after the first round and had a blistered foot that bloated (in final appeal). Or that Marquez—unnerved with more punches than Pacquiao (322 versus 300) in the last 10 rounds. Pacquiao was "robbed of victory" because our rapera said so. To be sure, regardless of the final count, the losers in this election will be crying "We was robbed!"

4. Losers must learn from Pacquiao's experience. Interviewed after the fight, the "people's champion" cordially expressed regret for getting the less deserving end of the decision. Instead of going home and sulking in his private cave, it's fighting despite the odds—not the final outcome—that shows the spirit of a true warrior like Pacquiao. Both Roco and Villanueva are true champions in my book.

—ED GARCIA,
Unit 7B Arcadia I Bldg.,
120 Amorsolo St.,
Legaspi Village, Makati City

LETTERS

Immortal Nick Joaquin

"GOOD night, sweet lords." F. Sionil Jose, as speaker for the Filipino National Artist, ended his speech with those words on the stage of the main theater of the Cultural Center of the Philippines one bright and lively late May morning in Manila, during a misery and emotional farewell to the most illustrious scholar of late Miguel Bros. Sionil had to fight back tears after the time. I remember the ceremony in Malacañang in 2003, when Sionil was given the National Artist distinction. He gave a witty, snappy, humorous speech. But in the CCP he must barely finish his words of tribute to his friend Nick Joaquin, the best Filipino writer ever.

Joaquin has been praised with eminent as a poet, playwright, novelist, historian, a master in every literary genre he ventured into.

But not enough emphasis has been given to Joaquin as a philosopher. Sidney Hook has explained with such clear exposition the division of the Filipino identity. His dynamic view of identity as a process of becoming is really the best theory to explain the Filipino identity and manifests why the Filipino is basically

Joaquin was educated to accept public recognition, homage and awards. Although he would not care at all, and his grandson is far happier than jokers, I wanna help but think that those who give the Nobel Price have made a big mistake in letting Joaquin go without one. But for them, now that Joaquin is gone and cannot disappear at holidays, we in Intramuros Covenanta, the Spanish Cultural Center in Manila, are preparing one for him.

Not to be known, Quijano de Manila was his nickname when writing articles for the press. The name "Quijano" reminds of the same honors as "Joaquin" but in a different sense, whose not many people seem to think Alonso Quijano is the name of the main character of the universal novel "Don Quijote de la Mancha," written by Miguel de Cervantes. We find it very apt as pay tribute to the memory of Joaquin by giving this name to the (we don't) first will be honored by the Intramuros Covenanta to distribute or bestow those first premiere cervantal trophies because Spain and the Philippines.

As protectors of the Spanish culture in the Philippines, we owe a lot to Joaquin. In a time when the dispersion of the Hispanic layer of the Filipino identity was almost neglected, Joaquin showed his mastery writing poems in Spanish ("Cuentos and Tilings)" which includes the "famous" list of the 11 greatest poems in Philippine history. The same it a deep and deep interpretation of history with conclusions exposed in an attractive manner (was with touches of a genuine sense of humor). Attending Philosophy is empty, indeed.

Nick Joaquin is already immortal.

—ADELFA GARCIA,
director,
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Napocor's woes, people's cross

THE FREEDOM from Debt Coalition holds the present and past administrations accountable for the heavy financial losses of the National Power Corp., which reached P100 billion in 2003.

According to newspaper reports, Napocor expects to incur more losses due to the peso's depreciation, high cost of foreign borrowings and series of fuel price hikes. The 40-centavo per kilowatt-hour cap on Napocor's purchased power cost adjustment since June 2003 was to be blamed for the losses.

Indeed, the rising cost of the peso against the dollar and of Sird raise Napocor's obligations to independent power producers. This is so because most, if not all, of the IPP contracts are dollar-denominated and Napocor either provides for the fuel requirement or absorbs the effect of the peso-dollar fluctuation in the cost of fuel. On top of this is the take-or-pay provision which guarantees IPPs with income from the contracted power even if not actually generated.

Napocor entered into IPP agreements starting with 12 power contracts during the Aquino administration, then with 34 during the Ramos presidency and two under Estrada. President Macapagal-Arroyo gave the green light for the implementation of the controversial Cadiz-Sweetwater-Kidapawan liquefied dispute quarantee about to expire.

Because of the onerous terms in the IPP contracts, Napocor's debts ballooned from P232 billion in 1994 to almost P1.4 trillion in 2003, which accounts for almost 20 percent of the P5.4 trillion consolidated public sector debt. Napocor's aggregate liability is equivalent to more than 80 percent of the P1.8 trillion debt of the national government and 78 percent of the P1.7 trillion total debt of state-owned and controlled corporations. Despite the so-called savings from the re-negotiated IPP contracts that the Macapagal-Arroyo administration has been touting about, Napocor's financial obligations keeps growing.

But the government really make some savings from the renegotiation of IPP contracts? We'll never know until the government shows us the details of the amended contracts.

The level of Napocor's debts is alarming as it largely contributes to the current debt crisis; as government has no business heavily from international and local markets to help finance it. Recently, the government raised $400 million sovereign guaranteed bonds for Napocor, which is part of its $1.3 billion borrowing requirements for 2004.

The FDC believes that the government can reduce Napocor's huge monetary obligation, search in financial hemorrhage and address the high cost of electricity by taking decisive actions, such as the cancellation of the IPP contracts. Unless the government does so, Napocor's debt, despite the privatization of its assets, people will continue to bear on their shoulders the financial imperative power.

—LEO B. HACHE,
secretary general,
Freedom from Debt Coalition,
34 Mahiga St., Central Murtin, QC

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Across the NATION
Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

Tension up as losing bets hang on

Bomb scare, irked Perez throw off count

By Marlon Ramos and Mel Magsino
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

A BOTTLE containing sand created a stir outside a school in Calamba, Laguna where the canvassing was being held after residents called police when they noticed the homebrew bomb for a bomb.

Senior Insp. Roy Manongsong, head investigator of the city police, said they received a telephone call from a resident near the Calamba Central School 2 at about 9 a.m. who reported seeing what looked like a bomb outside the school.

Manongsong said they immediately dashed to the report and found the supposed bomb outside the school fence.

Police bomb disposal units checked the thing, then found that it was only sand placed inside a gin bottle.

"The gatekeeper of the school was the first one who noticed the bomb. Apparently, it was meant to scare people after the local election officer proclaimed the winners in the local elections here after the canvassing ended last Thursday," Manongsong said.

He said it was impossible for anybody to plant bombs near the school because they have armed policemen assigned to make sure of the school's security.

On Wednesday night, women gripped the emotions after supporters of mayoral candidate Salvacion Lazaro held a rally and vigil outside the school premises. They accused rival candidates and incumbent Rep. Joaquin Chipeco of manoeuvring the canvassing.

Cavite

In Cavite, Cavite, Senior Supt. Roberto Rosales, Cavite police chief, said units from the police regional mobile group would reinforce troops assigned to the town to guard the municipal hall, where around 600 supporters of opposition mayoral candidate Linda Cantos were desperate on Wednesday night.

The supporters tried to disrupt the canvassing of votes prompting policemen to fire shots to disperse the unruly crowd.

Rosales said angry supporters of Cantos, who is running under the Nationalist People's Coalition, staged a rally at around 7:30 p.m. just outside the session hall where the canvassing of votes was being held.

The rallyists accused Cantos's rival, Dahlia Loyola of the Lakas-Christian Muslim Democrats, of massive fraud to oversee the election results.

Rosales said some of Cantos's supporters were unruly and started throwing stones and other hard objects at the town hall.

He said the protestors even broke glass

TAKES toll Into the town of Carmona, Cavite to send a message to feuding political rivals that the law should not be the hands of authorities.

Poll execs turn to soldiers for security

By PDI Virgie Bureau

DAGUPAN CITY—A team of Army soldiers were sent out to the towns of Calabasa in Leyte and Bitoon Dalila in Negros Occidental following rising tensions due to election related incidents.

Major Gen. Gloria Rabonza, head of the 6th Infantry Division based in Roxas, ordered the deployment of troops to Calabasa town after an Army escort of incumbent Mayor Raul Po was shot and wounded by a supporter of defeated mayoral candidate Leonardo Ortega last Wednesday.

Some 20 soldiers were deployed to Molave Dalila on Wednesday a day after municipal election officer Elmer Ita received threats to his and his family's life.

Private First Class (PFC) Rosalyn Cumba suffered a bullet wound in the chest after he was shot by Ernie Suriao at around 3 p.m. Wednesday in front of the legislative building in Calabasa where the canvassing of votes was being conducted.

Po's two other escorts—Pfcs. Pancho Hernandez and Antonio Rabaya—immediately fired at Suriao who managed to escape.

Po, who was later proclaimed as winner in the mayoral contest, blamed his opponent for the shooting incident.

"By shooting my escort, he (Ortega) would like to send a message. He does not want me to assume the post," Po told the Inquirer in an interview over his mobile phone.

Ortega denied the allegation, saying he did not have any control over his supporters.

"I have already conceded defeat even before the results are proclaimed. So why should they implicate my name?" he added.

Troops deployed, count threatened

ILAGAN, Isabela—About 120 Army soldiers from the 5th Infantry Division were sent to the provincial capitol here on Thursday night to stop supporters of Gov. Faustino Dy Jr. from disrupting the canvassing of votes.

Lawyer Rex Ostera, acting Isabela election supervisor, asked Army officials in the province to secure the canvassing area following a commotion at the provincial amphitheater where the canvassing was being held on Thursday night.

Reports said some 16 Dy supporters entered the canvassing area and tried to disrupt the proceedings.

The official Commission on Election count on Friday elected Dy trailing Mario Evasco Cielo Dañaco. Dañaco received 165,443 votes while Dy got 87,347 votes in 222 of 35 cities and one city in Isabela.

The National Citizens Movement for Free Elections' count on Friday showed Dañaco with 187,143 votes and Dy with 132,899 votes.

Ostera suspended the canvassing on Thursday night and resumed it at 9 a.m. Friday.

More than 3,000 supporters of Dy and Dañaco massed up at the capitol grounds on Thursday but they left before dusk as soldiers arrived.

Dy, one of the leaders of the Dy political clan, said he would respect tribunal would be the outcome of the election in his protest.

But Dy said he would not concede the race until the results of the final Comelec canvassing were known.

INQUIRER Visayas

Allan Jan Bandayrel
Senior Chief Editor/Pres. Brondcasts

The pain of betrayal

ON THE squalid streets of local politics, profiled in the name of the game, the general rule rather than the exception, the not-so-secret weapon of hardcore realpols: professional politicians' soul-deep pain.

In this year's no-race, familiar names stood out, the same people who have frolicked and thrived in electoral sludge for ages. The same candidates slugged it out on May 10 to preserve their family traditions, as vital little kingdoms and pork barrel funds.

Five-Sen. John Gregory "Johnjohn" Osmeña, a political greenhorn just learning the ropes of this very cruel game, now knows the pain of betrayal. He paid the price for believing that sweet-talking politicians, including his father, couldn't go back on their word.

Barring laws governed by Gen. Pablo Garcia as his anointed successor, the unsuspecting upstart willingly gave his all—hours, soul and the Cagayan's vaults—to the wily veterans.

Sen. John "Sonny" Osmeña, a survivor of many great electoral battles, is once over the handwriting on the wall and continued John-John. But the prodigal son made an egregious decision that would haunt him for the rest of his life: He decided that his father's wanted enemy-successors deserving of his trust.

While the day of reckoning came, and burning graves what he wanted, Garcia dropped the two governor and reunited his daughter Carmelalyn. The brazen desertion has gone down as one of the greatest political swindles in the annals of Cebu politics.

If that ever hurt John-John, his father's decision to cry a deal with a rival candidate and dump him as the last minute must have been truly devastating.

Now the pragmatic, solid-blooded politician seems determined to preserve his winning record in politics ("The worst lost an election") than literally unity (to what's there left to preserve). Senator Osmeña chose to salvage a quivering campaign over a chance to win back John-John's respect.

In the name of political glory, Sonny has pasted ways with his brother, cousins and relatives. I should we count his only son among his growing list of estranged relatives?

But the Osmeñas don't have the monopoly on reckless political horse-trading. Other politicians know how to play the game.

At cruel times, Alfredo "Yedda" Duano, patriarch of the influential Duano clan of Bandaan City in Cebu's ninth district, sold his whole endorsement of Gumersindo Garcia after realizing his top foe.

The former city mayor claimed his endorsement of Gumersindo was a joke...as if politics be a thing in the most politician the him is just a joke and not a very lucrative business. He didn't sell by mean to scrutinize the governor's daughter. Pending revealed, that story that spurious, she was in time for her father's coveted position.

It looked funny if not be the grotesque implications. Pedoing asking Lady Garcia to please sit down and then suddenly kicking the chair away as she does. Where did old-school courtesy go?

The real reason Duano had come to terms with his family's sister nemesis, Senator Osmeña, limits the supposed deal, the senator promised to junk his long-time ally Rep. Pantaleon Alvarez, in favor of Duano's daughter, Jet.

At the height of his belligerence, the senator belittled the great Osmeña family as "rising given." Perhaps, therefore, should have been smoking and swallowing the elemental words of Rep. Sonny: "This means war."

However, in politics, libel and honor are nothing. Winning is everything.

Any a city councilor wanted to commit her family's chair and winning streak to the House of Representatives, and needed Sonny's supporters to get there.

Congresswoman Rose Beth's hadn't She failed to help Osmeña's cause in the ninth district. With his ratings in various survey line dipping, Senator Osmeña desperately encouraged around for local support...even if that means disposing of his local supporters who couldn't anymore dollars.

Did losing get enough to make it bank in the Senate?

Many Cebuanos remember his famous "Magsuya Ayow. Dios mayor!" and "wenders sasabihin long" line after the 1998 elections when he and his presidential candidate Joseph Estrada lambed out in Cebu.

When the senator started to make good his throne, realigning hands for local projects to other allies, the survivor lamented "Dio howyard." A few days from now, we shall know how bad they really felt.

WILLIS: Bridal dream

BMW meant 80 houses for poor

By Carla P Gomez
La Carlota City

IF ONLY more rich Filipinos will do what this Briton did, the homeless may be fewer in the Philippines.

Dylan Wills, 25, owns a computer games firm in England. Last year, he sold his new Smart car, a BMW, not to buy another or bigger one but to finance the building of houses for the poor in the country.

Wills is a volunteer of the Gawad Kalinga, a project started in 1995 by a Catholic group, Couples for Christ. Through their action, the volunteers hope that they can help the poor not only to build their homes but also to become self-sufficient.

Wills said the money he received for selling his silver 183 BMW in 2003—equivalent to P3.2 mil. lion—was able to build 80 houses in Bulacan. The houses are now home to 400 people.

Wills's example actually inspired three wealthy Filipinos to do the same. Choosing to remain anonymous, they have decided to give up their two BMWs and a Ford Explorer and give the proceeds from the purchase of the vehicles to build more houses, according to the foreign benefactor.

Two weeks ago, Wills was in Negros Occidental to help build houses and teach the beneficiaries how to start sustainable livelihood programs. He also opened the award about the Gawad Kalinga abroad to raise funds.

Guilty

The Briton said he learned of the charitable project from a Filipina friend, Donna Ruelil, who went to England in 2002 and told him that she was feeling guilty about going there because the cost of her ticket could build one house for the poor.

"She told me all about the GK work, so in January 2003, I stopped by the Philippines for three hours to visit a GK site," Wills narrated.

"I had just bought my BMW but when I got back to England, I felt guilty about driving it when it could build 80 houses for the poor," he said.

Not long after, he decided to part ways with his car, but it was not the only possession that the GK convert had sold. He also sold his Counter-play.com business and now spends more time in the Philippines helping the projects carry out its mission, along with about 160,000 other Filipino volunteers throughout the country.

While in Negros, Wills joined other volunteers and personnel from the Department of Agriculture to promoting food self-sufficiency in two GK communities in Negros Occidental.

Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo and Jess "Pepito" Gumangan, chair of the National Council on Food Security and Jobs Creation, visited the Decision Dairy Raising village in Barangay Balayong, Silay City, and Fairytale Butterflies in Barangay Balabag, La Carlota City.

In Bacolod Diocese, GK provincial head Bob Magdalena said 22 houses had already been built out of a target of 40 houses for 200 people.

The neighborhood association owns a bakery and residents are now working on a fishpond to raise tilapia to house their livelihood, Magdalena said. He said the group also planned to raise mud crabs and put up a communal vegetable garden.

Change for the better

"The projects, he said, would enable residents to produce their own food and save money too.

RESIDENTS build Gawad Kalinga houses in Hacienda Remedios in La Carlota City.

One of the beneficiaries, Wilmer Go, 38, revealed that before the GK came to his course, he and his family used to live in a congested squatters area in Silay.

"With the help of GK, we no longer live in a squatters' village but have brightly painted houses spread apart, providing a healthier environment for us to live in," he said in Hiligaynon. "GK has taught us values that has enabled households in the village to live harmonously and collectively solve problems."

More than building these homes, the program "has helped (us) changed our lives," Go said.

In Hacienda Remedios, which is owned by Sons Tribute, agrarian reform beneficiaries are also getting GK homes.

So far, 28 out of the 30 targeted houses for almost 208 people have been built, Magdalena said.

To augment their livelihood, the residents are now growing organic vegetables and cocoa in the area. Aside from for sale under the program, not owners An Zayra said.

Lorenzo said the agriculture department's installation under the GK village in providing production inputs, seeds and technical and marketing networks so that the target communities could sustain food production and income-generating enterprises.

Since the Couples for Christ movement started the project in 1995, 273 GK communities have so far been built all over the country.

"It is not just building houses but really improving communities," Secretary Antonio Meloto, GK executive director.

Right now, the agriculture department and the GK are jointly developing 46 areas throughout the country, seven of which are in the Visayas. These areas, according to Lorenzo, will become models of village-based entrepreneurship and agri-technology, such as vegetable gardening and livestock raising, not only in the countryside but also in urban communities.

"We believe poverty could be minimized and solved by providing missionary communities the opportunities to empower themselves by providing them the needed assistance and basic knowledge to enable them to feed themselves first, and later to earn additional income so they could afford other basic needs," he said.

"We hope this Gawad Kalinga project will help ease poverty in the Visayas," he said.

Hope, pride

The five other communities in the Visayas to be constructed by the GK project are in Concepcion, Iloilo; Bacilbac, Cebu; Hilongos, Southern Leyte; Ide Ardine, Leyte; and in Wanale City, Southern Leyte.

Meloto said that with these new communities, the GK would be helping the poor help themselves and show that the program was "about nation building, about looking at the poor not as a burden but the greatest potential of this country."

"If we just organize and motivate them and help them super for a better life, then we will unleash the greatest asset we have—which is the poor," he said.

More importantly, he added, "this is about Filipinos taking pride in themselves again as a people, seeing our inspirations as our hope."

ELECTION 2004

Twists, turns in local races

BY THE results of the elections come in, the political landscape in the provinces becomes clearer and here are some of the images that have been drawn:

■ It is a double whammy for the Villanosas of Bicutan, Bulacan, as Bongbong Pilipinas president-in-waiting Eduardo Villanosa re-echoes in his hometowns. Villanosa, founder of the Senate Blue Ribbon Committee, trailed actor Fernando Poe Jr. by 2,819 votes. The evangelist's son, Bocaue Mayor Eduardo Villanosa Jr., also loses in his reelection bid.

■ The family of Nueva Vizcaya governor may end up competing for Cusi-o Pacifico de Ingle's senior citizen's representative seat in the province. Padilla, with 80,345 votes, leads second placer Juan Ponce Enrile (with 40,975 votes) by 39,720 votes. Padilla's wife, Ruth, however, is trailing in the lone congressional district race.

■ The six reelectionist representatives of Pangasinan are also leading. They are actor Gilbert Gilbert (first district), Amado Espino (second district), Carmelino Tampan (third district), Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. (fourth district), Marcos Constantino (fifth district) and General Rodolfo El Salado (sixth district). Dr. Victoria and Ophelia, sons of Isabela ex-governor Eduardo "Dimaling" Cojuangco Jr., are unopposed.

■ The political fortunes of the Pagdanganan clan of Cabanatuan, Bulacan, starts to ebb. Vice gubernatorial candidate Raymond Dag-Dagitan trails her mother-in-law Vice Gov. Aurelia Pantoja-Pagdanganan by 4,000 votes. Dagitan is a son of former Gov. Roberto Pagdanganan. His cousin, provincial candidate Jojo Pagdanganan, son of outgoing Cabanatuan Mayor Ramon Pagdanganan, lost to Dr. James de Jesus.

■ The Liberal Party at the Gate mobilized in Quezon as four of its candidates for House seats are headed for victories. In the province's first district, Rep. Rafael Nantes has unopposed while former Quezon board member Chris Lloyd Suarez withdrew his candidacy several days before the elections. The Comelec has proclaimed Nantes the district representative.

The trend is irreversible for the victory of the three other LP candidates, former Rep. Danilo Nantes, in Quezon's third district, defeating former governor Eduardo Enverso (LDP) in Sariaya; Proceso Alcala, in the second district having a comfortable lead over incumbent Rep. Lyceno Panotelan Lobos (UNO) and Lucena City's Bel Bonifacio Talaga (LDP).

■ In Lanao del Norte, former Bureau of Internal Revenue commissioner Unoyanes Mutamo-Chato (LDP) took an early lead in the congressional race for the province's lone district. Initial and unofficial results showed that Chato has won a close majority over incumbent Rep. Benasir Ututo Jr. in the two-cornered fight in the province with 67 of the 12 municipalities of the province.

■ Losing mayoral bet Francisco Tito of gold club BK Shinata in Mankayan, Cordillera Valley, feared for his life, claiming his opponents out to kill him. He chose to blame Mankayan Mayor Jose Molintas Mamaid Jun? Influences. This was earlier tagged as the one behind the mayor's killing last year.

■ President Macapagal was over Bonanda-Pue Jr. by 1.97 votes in Nambol's final tally of 3,213 of 3,643 precincts in Iloilo City. No-one knows where the remaining would be if the votes in the "inconsistency folder" election returns from the remaining 430 precincts were canvassed.

■ The chair of the municipal board of canvassers in the town of Calumbia, Sultan Kudarat is entering wrestling in the stalled canvassing of election returns from 23 precincts out of 93 disputed precincts. Commission on Elections Regional Director for Central Mindanao Darius Calbar said he has time that Lucinda Sangcaredan reported for the canvassing area on May 11. The night of May 13. After the next morning's canvassing said her colleagues she felt sick and had to leave. She failed to return there. Calbar said as soon as they could find a replacement, canvassing would resume. PIR Northern James Ruivera and PIR Central James Reid, Sofia F. Abdurahman, K. and Rogelio B. Pinto PIR Southern Lauren Barroso, Anthony A. Alluda, Jeffrey M. Tupaz, Ferdinand G. Dacuda, PIA Mindanao Bureau

ILOILO for those election personnel in Lanao del Sur rotten at a time when the votes come in at their slowest rate.

Namfrel, Comelec tallies in Mindoro seen conflicting

CALAPAN CITY — The provincial chair in Mindoro Occidental of the Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) said he was pounded by conflict in the figures being counted by his group and the Commission on Elections (Comelec).

Fr. Philip Alcantara, Namfrel's Occidental Mindoro chair, said the numbers of votes that the Comelec was tabulating was less than their being tabulated by the Namfrel.

Percentages

While the Comelec has already declared it has counted 100 percent of the votes in the province, Namfrel records showed that only 96 percent of the votes had been counted by the volunteer election monitoring group.

According to volunteer Norman Nieva, election results from 28 precincts were not counted because only 65 percent was actually required by the Namfrel to perform its duty under the Namfrel was accomplished already 96 percent.

At about 4 a.m., yesterday, the Comelec proclaimed the provincial winners.

Occidental Mindoro has been declared one of the four hot spots in its closely watched during this elections.

Nation also said that in general, the elections have been peaceful, honest, orderly and clean.

In Calapan City, the Comelec proclaimed a new city mayor, Gerling Rincal.

He replaced three term Mayor Arturo Hasalgan, who won beats the vice gubernatorial race.

Five Sets

For the first time, five candidates competed for the mayoral position.

On Monday noon, 1:45 km away from the city incumbent Mayor Rincal's "Boy" Mallonzing claimed that she was being cheated and requested a stop to the counting of votes.

Comelec provincial chair Leonardo Abalos Jr., however, suggested to local Comelec officials that they proceed with the proclamation because the contested votes are significantly less than the margin of her rival. Bladimir F. Wenk, PIA Southern Luzon Bureau

Bomb scare, irked Perez throw off count

Soldiers called in to prevent bloodshed

Last May 7, Ramon Iloko and Eduardo Medellin, two of Gonzales supporters, were shot and killed by four armed men in their cargo Olongo, Catubuan.

Gonzaga believed that the suspects belonged to the lawyer's camp, an allegation denied by the.

In Misamis Sur, Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Sacdalan, 303rd Brigade commander, deployed 28 soldiers to help assist that the counting of votes was conducted following the death threats received by the election officer.

He created the threats during the counting of votes on Tuesday night, prompting him to suspend the proceeding until later the municipal hall.

He says there was no blood at the Bacolod Samaritan Hospital in Bacolod City due to high blood pressure.

Replacement

Provincial Comelec supervisor Marcelino Gardoza immediately assigned assistant poll officer Jaladdin Sanan to replace the canvassing. In Misamis Padilla in the absence of Ilos.

On the same night, Alberto Bandilla Jr. claim to secretary of massacre Hector Jose Garcia Jr., was arrested at about 9:00 p.m. after he was caught carrying a .38 cal. pistol and 13 bullets in a checkpoint manned by soldiers of the 13th Infantry Battalion at the town proper. Garcia is seeking re-election against Frank Nonoyon.

The father of a vice mayoral candidate is facing charges for brandishing an Armalite rifle while the City Hall in Bicutan City Capis on Wednesday night.

Angel Calitan, father of Councilor Alan Calitan, was charged with violation of the Comelec gun ban before the city prosecutor's office in Bicutan.

Police Senior Inspector Rustico Bantoton, Capis police director, confiscated a baby Armalite rifle, which Angel alleged to be loaded at his residence. He said he believed was the plan of some people to rob his son of his victory.

Confined

Angel, who owns a gun store here, escaped detention after his blood pressure shot up. He is now confined at the Capis Doctors Hospital.

Angel joined his son's supporters in going to the City Hall on Wednesday to protest on learning that the canvassing of votes was suspended because of a bomb threat and a 26-minute power failure that occurred interfered him.

Calitan's supporters believed that the bomb threat, which turned out to be a hoax, was concocted to pave the way for a plot to manipulate the election results.

Calitan was leading the race by more than 1,000 votes. Jose A. Calitan, Gerry T. Pagbuhatan, Felipe Calitan and Alberto R. Bulambot, PIA Visayas Bureau

Troops deployed as protests threaten counting

"It is preposterous to say who wins (the governor) in the elections. Let us not speculate on who is the winner. The canvassing is not yet finished," he said.

Alexander Uy, a brother of the Dra. Int. in Iligan City and mayor of four Mariano town, in Magindanao town, Benjamin Uy is a trailing four Pangandaman-Ji for mayor.

Redorlemain Rep. Prospero Uy Ji was won by a landslide over businessman Carlos Chan in the third congressional district, which covers the municipalities of Mandaluyong City and Alaka, respectively.

In Pampanga, two campaign leaders of losing City of San Fernando mayoral candidate Andrew Dominguez, former chief of the Bureau of Immigration, were arrested on Friday as they led some 500 people in storming the city hall.

Supt. Silvestre Tinga, San Fernando police chief, said the arrest were made to stop the rebels from destroying the gate and possibly damaging the last phase of the canvassing at the city council office.

The police Tinga said, had restrained "hundreds followers" since Wednesday when the supporters of Dominguez, her son, congressional candidate Jon Dominguez, and another losing mayoral candidate, Hugo Lagman, began holding protest rallies and pickets at the city hall area alleged "wholesale ballot switching and tampering of election returns."

Dominguez's rival, Rep. Oscar Rodriguez, and his son's rival, Mayor Reynaldo Aquino, reserved to those accusations, she said.

Rodriguez and Aquino denied the alleged tactics and accused the Dominguez of committing "massive election fraud."

In Bulacan, losing vice gubernatorial candidate Raymond Pagdanganan and members of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan accused administration candidates of vote-buying and harassment.

The Bayan Bloc and the other militant groups in Bulacan picketed the Hiyas Convention Center in Malolos City where the provincial canvassing of votes was being held.

But Gregoria Lamandal, Bulacan election officer, dismissed the allegations, saying no major irregularity happened in the conduct of the elections and canvassing.

He asked the protestors to file their complaints before the proper government offices if they had enough evidence to support their allegations.

In Zita, the canvassing of votes was in Tiong town started on Friday in the capital town of Bongued. The elections in some Tiong town were postponed on Monday due to bad weather and the results for Bayan Bloc candidates.

Incumbent Mayor Edwin Crisologo and Antonio Bontowan, brother of slain Mayor Clarence Bontowan, are contending the mayoral seat.

Reports from the Cordillera police said the ballot boxes that were snatched in Tinglayan, Kalinga on Tuesday were recovered on Wednesday. The ballot boxes were taken to the Kalinga police office for safekeeping.

Reports also said police in Sagada, Mt. Province, recovered 29 misshapen ballots during election returns from the town Councilor Consuelo Fortunato.

The police said they also recovered a bottle filled with gasoline from Fortunato.

Except for Kalinga and Apayao, most of the Cordillera areas proclaimed their winning elected officials on Thursday night.

Armando Wilson, Cordillera Cordillera director, went to Alan on Friday to persuade teachers there to start the counting.

Lawyer Julius Neves, Comelec deputy director, said teachers refused to begin the count. Election returns from the remote areas are usually brought to the municipalities "but we could not force them who they were afraid of."

Comelec also delayed the proclamation of elected members of the Benguet provincial board after two election board members Mandaan Bino complained of "illegal Arroyo" vote padding and shortfall. Reports from Villamor Mayo, Jr., Arlito Glen Paredes, Donna Dimanlig and Wenner Gabrera, PIR Northern Luzon Bureau, and Teresita Orejas and Carmela Reyes, PIA Central Luzon Bureau

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Woods just a shot off Lonard, Lewis

IN THE HUNT
Australian Greg Norman watches his tee shot during the second round of the BMW Asian Open. The Great White Shark started his round with a 67.

IRVING, Texas—Peter Lonard won't make this mistake again.

Lonard, of enjoying some time off with the boys Grant Updel, the 36-year-old Australian decided to get one last shot in Texas and his game during the short afternoon. He came to Florida during Christmas break, worked out with his trainer and wound up cracking a rib that kept him off the PGA Tour for six weeks.

"Next year, I'll stay in Australia and get dressed with my mates, like I always do," Lonard said.

The injury set him back this year, but Lonard seemed to see some progress Thursday in the first round of the Byron Nelson Championship. Besides hitting only six fairways, he hit enough greens and holed enough putts to go around Cottonwood Valley in 6-under 64 to share the lead with J.L. Lewis.

Lewis also played the easier Cottonwood Valley, making no bogeys and all four of his birdies coming before noon.

They were one stroke ahead of Tiger Woods, whose round looked familiar.

After finishing one shot out of the playoff at the Mercedes Championship despite hitting only 43 percent of his fairways, Woods again had a hard time finding the short grass, but certainly found the cup. Another ornate round off the tee was compensated with good iron play and great putting, and he wound up one shot back after a 65 on the TPC at Las Colinas. He was tied with Bradley Hunt, who played Cottonwood Valley.

"Basically, I had one really bad golf shot today, and that was on 10," Woods said, referring to a driver that caddie Steve Williams suggested he hit. Woods never used right into the trees, had no choice to get to the green and hit a flop shot some 25 feet beyond the flag for a bogey.

Still, it wasn't a bad start considering he played on the toughest Las Colinas course.

Most players were surprised they even finished considering the weather—gathering storm clouds, strong gusts and lightning on the horizon, but it was never close enough to the course that play was stopped.

The softer greens allowed 69 players to break par. AP

WOODS eyes a putt on the 12th.

Macatangay nips Bunyi at Orchard; Superals up

TAGAYTAY: Macatangay nipped Gino Bunyi in a sudden-death playoff for his third consecutive win victory in the Tagaytay golfest—all-more than ever their family energy with the ball-hunting Gino Bunyi on Thursday in the Inaugural Philippine Jungolf Tour at the Orchard Golf and Country Club in Dasmariñas, Cavite.

Tied for the lead after 36 holes, Macatangay and Bunyi still finished to with similar scores of 79 to send time duel into an encounter on the 18th hole of the Palmer course.

Macatangay made par while Bunyi bungled his bid for a first win with a bogey in the tourney sponsored by International Container Terminal Services Inc. and Philippine Airlines.

The Superals were almost denied of the mongrip a youngster Debbie de Villa.

Crystal Faith Superal, one of the top performers in last year's Junior World campaign, engaged in a shootout but was not able to wrest the three-stroke deficit she faced before the round ended up with 80s.

Superal carried 36 at 242 while De Villa was at 245 in Girls Class B.

Pedro Superal and sister Rihanna, however, topped their respective divisions in unsurprising fashion for the sweep that came after stroke fours in Sherwood Hills and Casitahong.

Pedro won three Class B by 29 with his 36-225 while Princess had 92-107 to top Girls Class C by 17 strokes.

Other winners were Erika Salinas (Girls Class A), Migo Ochoa (Boys Class B), Paulino Soto (Girls Class C), Kenya dela Cruz (Girls Class D), Jose Martin Fernandez (Boys Class D) and Ali Samson (Boys Class E).

The 10-year-old under-par rounds were to Bayer Sarangani and Amelia Ruiz.

The Tour, also supported by Grayola and Cinderella, goes to Southwoods next week.

ROUKLES: Hunting back

Scranton wrests lead sans big guns, Jenny

HAMILTON, Tennessee—With the LPGA tour's youngsters looking to break through in the absence of Annika Sorenstam and Jo Ri Yeh, 43-year-old Nancy Scranton grabbed a one-stroke lead Thursday with a 68 at the Franklin American Mortgage Championship.

Also absent was Filipina Jennifer Rosales, who fell off the stage in a freak accident after a photo session for the Golf Digest Magazine.

Her swing coach, Bong Lopez, told Rosales, who topped the Chick-Fil-A Charity tournament for her first LPGA title last month, bent her back...

Scranton is one of the oldest full-time members of the LPGA Tour, but it looked like she was in her prime as she birdied the final two holes of a bogey-free round at the Meadowlark Legends Club's Kidwell Course.

With Sorenstam and Yeh taking the week off, Stacy Prammanasudh and Candy Hannemann grabbed their share of the spotlight. Prammanasudh ended the day a stroke off the pace, with Hannemann sharing third, two shots back.

It was the best round of the year for Scranton, who has won just once in the last 11 years. AFP

PFF reconfirms ruling retraction

THE PHILIPPINE Football Federation reconfirmed recently that it had retracted a 1960s ruling that mandated all teams participating in its competitions to have a line-up composed of 60 percent Filipinos and 40 percent foreigners.

The reconfirmation came as questions and apprehensions were voiced out in the recently held Football Summit organized by the PFF.

In the early '60s, the then Philippine Football Association passed a ruling that disallowed teams with a line-up of more than 40 percent foreigners to participate in its leagues.

The rule followed the passage of the Retail Trade Nationalization Law which effectively disallowed the registration of retail businesses that were not at least 60 percent owned by Filipinos.

150 fights slated in 4-cock derby

COCKFIGHTING action starts early today as Araneta Mega Cockpit presents more than 150 fights in the G/S-L Cock Derby in cooperation between Cavite's Alligator Pit-Antique and Thunderbird Pitchmen.

At stake is a guaranteed P450,000 prize.

Among the favorite entries are Barahan (Benjie Lim), Sergio Diego (Lipatan), Cash Prenyo 3-Cock Jaro 3 (Abraham Bernabe), Nevada (Tin Reyes), Amarin (Ding Lacson), Samar (Vladimir Ogaya), 27 Kuwento (James Uy and Alan Tan), RMT Stallion (Romy Tan), BM Bolabatos (Boy Bunol), Rebecca (Bobby Sodio), Paner 4-cock May 26 (William Go), LA 939 (L. Montana), Bangsar Puno (Bobby del Rosario), Phoenix (Tin Reyes), (36) (Carding 9g) and 707 Rainbow (Rodrigo Villarubia).

NCA Araneta event set May 18 and 20

THE NATIONAL Cockers Association presents another 7-cock derby on May 18 and 20 at the Araneta Coliseum.

Derby hosts John Cayetano, Pol Intellando and Boy Bravo said that more than 40 entries are involved in this affair.

Submissions of entries is on May 17, 1 p.m. to 9 p.m., at the Araneta press gate. Contact 911-3161 and 911-2606 look for Gloria Antonio.

Also slated is the NCA 7-Cock Derby on June 1 and 3 to be hosted by the Bonifacio Group.

PROVINCIAL TABULATIONS

ELECTION 2004

CORRECTIONS

In the report today on provincial tabulations (Page A30), the Comelec lists as the progress report for Antipolo City Mayor Ynna Ongpin-Zobel's 1 st Congressional voting proportions and Mayor Victorino Dennis Chua's 2nd Congressional voting proportions as Senatorial. The figures were incorrectly labeled. The figures were actually 1st Congressional and 2nd Congressional, respectively.

The Manila Bulletin in the Internet cited in Global City Mayor Jejomar Binay's statement as saying: "[Ex-Sen. Tito] Sotto [Jr.] is not [Vice President Noli] de Castro's candidate." The Inquirer was inadvertently left out.

In the gubernatorial race in Iloilo province, the figures for unchecked election returns (ERs) in Pototan municipality were inadvertently interchanged. Pototan's unchecked ERs are 7,127 for Arthur Defensor Sr. and 7,128 for Niel Tupas Jr., not the other way around. The Inquirer regrets the error.

In the gubernatorial race in Capiz, the figures for unchecked election returns (ERs) in Dumalag municipality were inadvertently interchanged. Dumalag's unchecked ERs are 1,128 for Victorino Dy and 1,129 for Gerardo Espinosa, not the other way around. The Inquirer regrets the error.

When charisma collides with political reality

From page A1

lighted by the walkout after the Holy Week break of eight members of Poe's media liaison headed by Rodolfo Reyes, press secretary of then President Joseph Estrada. The walkout came at a crucial time when President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo was beginning to break away from a tie with Poe in the opinion surveys.

Out of the loop

According to a key staff member who asked not to be identified, Poe's former people were "the ones they left 'out of the loop.' They felt they were not being consulted and part of the inner circle that puts a staff around Poe.

Reyes' team was composed of the original group that helped Velarde Gallego, head of the Nationalist People's Coalition. Poe's media liaison was headed by a group done to him, including Sen. Vicente Sotto, Herald Santos Sen. Sonia Ortiz.

By the staff member's account, there were two parallel media groups—one led by Reyes and the other by the three gang...each taking different, often contradictory, lines.

The three group not only marginalized Reyes' team but also blocked its proposals to improve Poe's image.

For example, Reyes' team proposed a media interview for Poe on the day the staff member's account on his platform. The group prepared 100 questions in Filipino and English, including those dealing with difficult and even nasty issues, such as Poe's alleged extramarital affair with actor and his having a "love child."

The proposal never got past the Sotto studio. Not scheduled is much interview, but it never happened.

Aversion to the media

She seemed to have a "deep-seated aversion to the media," the staff member said. This aversion to preparation and to addressing issues was a disaster waiting to happen.

And it struck in March when Poe, at a presentation of his economic policy said he would "look into the possibility" of restructuring the government's foreign and domestic debt, instead of controlling the burgeoning local debt.

The statement rattled the market, which reacted in a signal for debt reposition. The proposal of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to raise the rate the Philippines would borrow to debt and that any restructuring "should be carefully studied."

Not made the statement after he contained a group of US advisers, including economists, to help him in his economic platform.

There were two groups of advisers, each giving him a separate committee. "One group was running in the house of Cayetano and the other, somewhere else. There was no coordinated consultative trying up the loose ends of the campaign," the staff member said.

What went wrong

Asked what went wrong with the Poe campaign, the staff member offered three things: media campaign organization without a centralized manager; antagonistic relations with the media; and the administration's deployment of government resources on election day.

Government, health cards, drug raids, witness rolls and job-creating infrastructure projects including trillion-peso roads.

The staff members said the campaign began to connect reality after Poe refused to talk with the media, to explain his platform and to engage in a debate over issues.

Poe did not "realize the value of communication" and seemed "frustrated by asking rounds," but the people "wanted to know his platform," the staff member said.

His relations with the media turned from bad to worse when he began a running war with reporters covering his campaign, including TV reporter Isabel Granada, whom he humiliated during a campaign rally.

Things came to breaking point when other reporters walked out on his campaign after his caution insulted one of their colleagues.

Sotto has said that the Poe campaign made sure that the reporters' food and accommodations were looked after. He failed to understand that what is more important to political reporters is not access to entertainment.

A former aide, Sotto was the political reporters' liaison to the corner of reporters' covering Poe, drew his personalities. Covering reporters do not ask hard questions.

Fundamental flaw

The fundamental flaw of Poe's campaign is that it was built on the assumption that his popularity would automatically translate into a victory in the presidency.

He seemed to believe in the notion that his fan base would automatically propel him to a political consolation.

Poe wasn't a profitable movie production company in which he produces and directs his own films where he is the principal actor and hero.

In the world of film, that is never contradicted and is used to celebrities for him. The tough-and-tumble world of politics is a ruthless democracy is often to him, and he is uncomfortable with it.

Poe's handlers also made the media. Pay broke a cardinal rule: that a politician should never antagonize reporters, who are the dumb troops of free journalism.

He handled them while he was campaigning for senator was a disaster for the administration that was using its resources of incumbency to counter his charisma, and with his opponents in the opposition, especially Sen. Panfilo Lacson's faction.

Natural constituency

Poe's camp ignored an important element of political reality, which are even political observers recognized.

Poe's supporters had studies that Mr Macapagal had a natural constituency to fall back on. They forgot that she was elected vice president in 1998 with more votes than Estrada, and had topped a presidential election.

It was to this constituency that Mr Macapagal reached to re-tap its support in her extensive grass-roots campaign, which crowned more pivotal than the Poe campaign failed.

Poe and his out-crack after exits believed that dissension alone could do it. When they have collided with political reality, the dissension were exposed and the Poe camp's vulnerability revealed.

The crumbling of the infrastructure as a mammoth shock. This explains why the and his adherents seem to cling to the illusion.

TIMBALTE in song is mentored by PDI photographer Edwin Bacasmas (extreme left) for visiting Press Undersecretary Ching Soriano (second) during a farewell party at Kalayaan Hall in Malacañang. Other members of the Presidential Photographers Association are Bernard Testa, Rene Pamplona, Willy Perez, Rhea Cotilda and Julius Reyes. (Story on Page A4)

MALACAÑANG PHOTO BUREAU

GMA widens call for reconciliation

From page A1

ing the people together behind an agenda of national unity and change."

Mr Macapagal first made the offer in one of her biggest rallies, Sen. Panfilo Lacson, who accepted.

But the President worried what seemed like a spoiler rebuff elsewhere.

An unimpeachable source at the Malacañang Pag-Asa told the inquirer that the Macapagal-Arroyo presidential candidate had begun to send his running mate, Herminio Aquino.

Aquino did not confirm or deny getting calls from Malacañang but admitted that there had been attempts by the Palace to enlist the support of Lacson.

He said it was possible that the President wanted Reyes on her side should the camps of Poe and ex-vice president Eddie Villanueva join forces and challenge the results of the elections.

The Aquino camp said the two still have their campaign strategy together through the recommendation of Speaker Jose de Venecia's wife, Gina.

"Mr. (Mr. De Venecia) told Aquino that she will be willing to meet him anytime and anywhere," said the source. "Aquino then declined."

The Speaker's wife and Aquino met at about 11 p.m. on Tuesday at the UEC coffee shop in The Net 11 in Tagaig.

After exchanging pleasantries, Gina asked Mr Macapagal's cellular number and handed her phone to Aquino.

"The President thanked him for his efforts to maintain an open line between the administration and Alyansa," said the source.

But when Mr Macapagal asked for category kind support from the Reyes camp, Aquino told her: "Ma'am, I am a true-relay to Raul."

The following day, the source said, Mr Macapagal potentially called up Reyes at his home in La Vista, Quezon City.

"They briefly talked, but Reyes did not commit anything," said the source.

'Tao diaw'

Aquino said Alyansa would not make any drastic moves at this point because "it is still anybody's game."

Reyes criticized the canvassing of votes as "tao diaw."

"I think the people have (shown a) largely good disposition for the canvassing," Reyes said at a thanksgiving Mass to her right.

He said there was a prevailing sentiment among the people that Monday's election exercise was a "veiled process."

"That is not good because the moral accountancy of leadership will be difficult to establish," said Reyes.

Reyes said that voter-buying on election day was "in a degree unequal in Philippine history."

"I think even in Manila, they had sample ballots worth P1,000 (on 05," said Reyes, who mentioned against waging protest rallies at this point.

"I don't want to say that," Reyes said when asked if he would join anti-GMA rallies being planned by other opposition groups.

He said either win or under at this point were the formula of this country.

"The challenge now is what to do for the country, what is the right thing we do for the country? We will have to study that. Multiparty management against (What is happening now is grave). Lumbia—no no final post-election exercise. Don't say this winners is not accepted), how do you heal?"

Reyes said the tragedy with a victory sealed by massive fraud was that the people might not believe the winner.

Premature

Realigyon ng Naghahalang Pilipino (RNP) leaders yesterday said Lacson's "premature acceptance of the President's offer of renewed, union betrayed suspicions that he may have struck a deal with the administration.

Sens. Edgardo Angara said that Lacson was presuming Mr Macapagal was already the winner.

"It's queer ... Why would a reasonable man come out and say that he's joining the government of a candidate who only had about 35 percent of votes (counted)?" Angara said.

Speaking to reporters, Angara wondered why Lacson would do such a thing "if he considers himself a genuine opposition (member)."

By mid-such a move by Lacson was not good for his image because "it bolsters the politics-as-usual tone."

"That's why he doesn't want to merge and unite the opposition—that there is an arrangement and a deal struck between him and the administration."

Poe's personal campaign manager, Sen. Ernesto Herrera III, shared Angara's opinion.

"If (Lacson) really said those things, then the suspicion that he was with GMA ... comes where along the way ... is beginning to crystallize," Herrera said.

But Sotto later said that opposition leaders "still want to give (Lacson) the benefit of the doubt."

Asked to comment on Lacson's plan to resign from the Lakas ng Kristiyanong Pilipino, Angara hinted that there was no need for him to do so.

He said Lacson had been "summarily dropped from the rolls" when he was indicted, shortly against party rules.

No capitulation

Lacson denied that he had capitulated to Malacañang.

"Let me point on record that I am not entering at this point and that I am open to reconciliation as whoever will be declared the winner in the presidential elections," Lacson said.

As to allegations that his acceptance of Mrs Macapagal's reconciliation offer was to exchange for certain concessions, Lacson told reporters: "Those are lies before. They know I couldn't be bought."

Top police officials expressed the hope and Ronaldo Ternarem Mr. Macapagal and Lacson would bring stability to the divided Philippine National Police.

If Lacson reconciled with the President, his estranged supporters in the PNP would be welcomed back into the mainstream, said Director Leon Mangasdal.

"This is a positive development," he told The Inquirer.

Another Lacson ally Supt. Francisco Villaruz, said unification should bring back professionalism in the national police. With reports from Christine F. Esguerra

Now, Erap wants to go to a children's party

From page A1

wants to spend time with the boy.

It used to be a matter of course. But soon Estrada lost faith in aid the Sandiganbayan for a temporary pass in spend today and tomorrow in Tanay, his home in Nueva Ecija to be his family gathering.

In a motion signed by his court-appointed lawyer Saul Malaya, Estrada said it was the boy's wish, too.

"It will bring joy to the kid," Malaya told reporters before 10 during the motion with the anti-graft court yesterday afternoon.

What next?

Although the court is just across from Camp Capinpin, where Estrada is in detention while being tried for plunder, Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio balked at the request.

Villa-Ignacio said: "Sana man lang, superfriends ang gusto(it's compromise pass for not another special session, his mother's birthday. Before that, during Holy Week, he was allowed to stay three days at the resort, for a spiritual retreat.

What now? Villa-Ignacio demanded: "With his many children, he may have to stretch or must work. It's a problem their birthdays."

The prosecution exaggeration, but a senior Ombudsman official says his point: "It will set a bad precedent. Next Estrada will ask to spend birthdays with the other children and their mothers."

17 weekends

That's about 17 weekends, for 10 acknowledged offspring and seven women.

Estrada, who is married to Imelda Ejercito, has admitted involvement with actresses Guia Gomingen, Joseph Ejercito, Park Soonim and Joy Melendrez, as well as celebrity Jessica and former Philippine Airlines flight attendant Rosemarie Lopez.

And he has at least nine grandchildren—soon to be 10—and the head of the number of weekends is a must.

Plus, Estrada did not always need to ask relatives in his many previous appeals to temporarily leave the detention center. Still awaiting decision, for instance, is his request to see the toilet and bath at his Tanay resort house, he said, the toilet in his Camp Capinpin quarters did not flush and the shower did not work.

No court order

Informed of Villa-Ignacio's remark, Malaya told the inquirer in a phone interview: "Sana lang pagbigyan. Ano naman yun (We just hope the court would indulge the boy)."

Then he really tried to count—or don't force Estrada was moved to the Tanay camp last October, he has reportedly walked over to the resort on several occasions, with the permission, and under the supervision, of the jail warden.

The Sandiganbayan has just thrown out the motion of Philippine National Police Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. making the suspension of the ongoing robbery conspiracy proceedings against top police officials involved in this.

Habaan and Chief Supt. Rolando Suerenmeno, Estrada's chief confidante, are said to have offered Estrada to wander on without court orders.

In a six-page resolution, a special division of the anti-graft court said it denied the motion "for lack of merit."

Exit poll shows 900,000 were denied right to vote

From page A1

the same survey that some 900,000 registered voters were unable to vote because they could not find their names on assigned voting precincts on the day of elections.

"In supp ratio terms, 8NO estimate that 16.5 million voted the polling places, of which 2.5 percent or about 900,000 could not find their names, leaving 15.6 million who did vote," the polling group said in a statement.

SWS based its estimates on interviews of 1,675 registered voters, of whom 1,068 or 38 percent declared vote, of those who did not vote, 11% said they could not find their names on the voters.

Based on these figures, SWS reckoned that there were as many as 900,000 disenfranchised voters nationwide.

Dropped names from voters' lists have served as a lightning rod for charges of cheating in the elections in the Poe camp, many of the anyo's supporters were disenfranchised.

The Macapagal administration has consoled there were clear irregularities in preparations for the vote, including the removing of names from a computerized list of voters supposed to weed out fraud.

SWS estimated the vote turnout at 81.8 percent of the 63.5 million registered voters. But Poe's camp estimates the actual turnout was much lower, suggesting that estimates of a high voter turnout by the Commission on Elections were being used to justify were padding in favor of Mr Macapagal.

Comelec estimates

For his part, Election Commissioner Resurreccion Borra lumps during his estimate of the voter turnout, finding suspicion stylell fraud.

After the provincy closed on May 10, Borra estimated the turnout at 75 percent. The following day, he revised his estimate, saying the turnout may have been 72.80 percent.

Yesterday Borra said about 8.5 million or 19.3 percent out of the 43.5 million registered voters were not able to cast their ballots. This would suggest a voter turnout of 80.5 percent.

Even so, Borra acknowledged that there was "a big number" of voters who were not able to cast their ballots.

"Once this issue was dumbbed closed (Sarap) she would like to gather this," he said.

"We want the list of names of those claiming to have been disenfranchised ... This is more factual, rational, a more scientific approach ... If we have the facts, we'll address the problem," Borra said.

In the same interview, Borra said that the Comelec had anticipated final spat in the voters' list. This was the reason, he said, that the Comelec directed election officers to incorporate the names of voters who solidified their registration into the official list, which includes voters in the 1998 and 2001 elections.

Local election officers

The Comelec failed to finish on Jan. 23 in plan of creating a master list of voters and their respective precincts. This prompted the commission to retain the voters' list to be the final election officers will have to do the encoding themselves—on top of their duty of handling ministers and tabulation proceedings.

The voters' list is made by the local election officers were present. So the various political parties, which, according to Borra, did not raise any protest.

Despite the fact that the May 10 voters' list covered all those who took part in the 1998 and 2001 elections as well as those who registered their registration, however, many were still re-elected.

Funding

Borra said the Comelec's operational costs also hampered by the delayed release of funds.

He pointed out that the government had to realign P1.3 billion to finance the elections and the money was released only in the middle of March.

Earlier this week, the Comelec had to abandon its plan for an automated elections and shift to the manual count when the Supreme Court junked the P1.3 billion automated election machine deal.

Borra said preparations for manual elections would usually take six months. Reports from AFP and Marlon Ramos

BUSINESS

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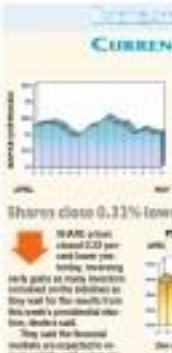
Farm sector posts highest growth in 15 yrs



By Christine A. Clavilan

THE ECONOMY, as measured by the gross domestic product (GDP), was estimated to have expanded by 5 percent in the first quarter from a year earlier, Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri said yesterday.

Neri made the forecast after the government announced that output by the farm sector, which accounts for a fifth of GDP, grew 6.16 percent in the first quarter from the same period in 2003—the strongest expansion in 15 years.

The Department of Agriculture attributed the "phenomenal growth" to good harvests, particularly of rice and corn.

Output in other areas—livestock, poultry and fishery—also expanded, it said.

The farm sector recorded a revised growth of 3.63 percent in the first quarter of 2003 from a year earlier.

"We are now seeing the fruits of the various programs we have put in place to increase production and productivity," Agriculture Secretary Luis D. Lorenzo Jr. said yesterday.

He was referring to the distribution of subsidized higher-yielding rice and corn seeds, expansion of irrigation facilities and credit given to farmers.

"With the sector's consistent growth during the past three years, we have been able to maintain our subsidy from the boom-and-bust cycle that characterized our agricultural sector in the past," he said.

Lorenzo said the country could sustain the growth momentum as the farm sector through the use of modern farm technology and better yielding seeds.

First-quarter output in the crops sub-sector, which accounted for half of the total value of farm production, rose 6.22 percent from a year earlier due largely to a record rice harvest.

Unmilled rice production jumped 13.34 percent in the first quarter to 6.42 million metric tons while corn output rose 13.4 percent to 1.316 million tons.

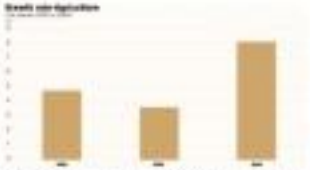
Fish output in the first quarter also expanded 3.62 percent.

Output in the fishery sub-sector surged 20.61 percent in the first three months from a year earlier.

The total value of agricultural production rose 13.63 percent to P192 billion at current prices between January and March this year, or more than double the 6.72 percent growth rate registered in the same period in 2003.

Lorenzo said good rice harvest was the result of the expansion in irrigated areas due to repair of

more to come



OFW remittances up 10% in March to $704.6M

By Doris C. Dumlao

DOLLARS sent home by overseas Filipinos rose by almost 10 percent in March from a year ago due to the deployment of more workers abroad and the peso's fall to record lows that entered more remittances.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas yesterday reported that inflows from overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) hit $704.65 million in March, or 9.95 percent higher than the $640.77 million in the same month last year.

This brought the first quarter OFW remittances to $1.92 billion or 4.29 percent better than the level during the same period last year.

"The first quarter's favorable performance provides comfortable buffer to the projected 5 percent growth of remittances for the whole of 2004," BSP Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes said in a statement yesterday.

"In fact, the last two months of the quarter each yielded almost 10 percent annual growth in remittances," Reyes said.

The growth in remittances in March was the strongest since the start of the year. In February, a 9.03 percent growth was posted while in January, there was a 1.03 percent contraction.

Reyes attributed the growth in March remittances to the following:

- the weakening of the peso to as low as 56.46 to the dollar that allowed higher conversion rates of foreign exchange remittances;
- the seasonal remittances in time for school enrollment, and
- the observed 16.9 percent increase in the deployment of Filipino workers abroad—to 287,126 from 246,599 in the same quarter in 2003.

Citing data from the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration, Reyes said land-based workers grew by 23.6 percent to 224,433 while sea-based workers rose by 3 percent to 57,693.

"Increased fund transfers from Hong Kong, the United States, the United Kingdom and Italy were observed during the first quarter, which more than compensated for the dash in remittances from other traditional labor markets such as Japan and Singapore," Reyes said.

Except for Hong Kong, Reyes said these countries were the usual destinations of higher-paid workers such as engineers, nurses, and information technology workers.

The peso depreciation in the first

more to

Governance in agriculture

By Ernesto M. Ordoñez
Contributor

ELECTIONS are over. Even as the vote counting continues, the Alyansa Agrikultura is already busy preparing for its meeting with winners and wins as president. The Alyansa is the largest farmers' and fishers' coalition today, composed of 28 national and local federations and organizations.

It will not be the first time the Alyansa will interact with the incoming president. The Alyansa had previously done a role reversal by presenting its proposed agriculture agenda to the presidentiables and vice-presidentiables for their response.

All five candidates agreed to adopt the Alyansa agenda with its small farmer and fisherfolk emphasis, except for minor modifications. The agenda is summarized in a two-page document, with specific outlets that general "motherhood" recommendations.

Unanimously agreed upon after saying something, the most important recommendations concerned major commodities (i.e. rice, corn, sugar, fruits and vegetables, livestock and poultry, and fishery/aqua).

The Alyansa also recommends a thrust to support agriculture (e.g. money plans, the agri-budget and irrigation), the international trade regime, agrarian reform, women, indigenous people and protected areas.

For the forthcoming meeting with the newly elected president, the Alyansa is giving special emphasis to two key recommendations in the area of governance.

Participation, accountability

The first recommendation on governance as listed in the agenda summary reads: "Ensure sound agriculture and fishery stakeholders participation and representation in planning and implementing bodies (e.g. councils on agriculture and fisheries councils) with improved transparency and accountability."

Edwin Andoc, chair of Region 1's Regional Agriculture and Fishery Council (RAFC), said, "The agriculture and fisheries councils (AFCs) at the national, regional, provincial and municipal levels are the legally mandated institutions for private sector participation in the government's agriculture development programs. It is only appropriate that the Department of Agriculture (DA) invest in better AFCs both their programs and the corresponding budget distribution. This will provide for both transparency and accountability."

The RFCs are generally set up to ride the details in programs and budget that Andoc recommends. However, these details are necessary for municipal private sector participation. Corruption and misuse of funds will also be minimized if newly elected governments institute that kind of transparency and accountability. this will be a giant step toward good governance.

Focus and coordination

The second recommendation on governance reads: "Ensure a focused and coordinated approach to agriculture development, such as establishing coordination mechanisms between and among the DA, the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)."

Ricardo Rivarola is Region 10's RAFC chair and the national executive director of the NAFC in the country. "I have seen agricultural development resource inefficiently used because there is a lack of focus in the absence of a master plan," he said. "And when the DA acts without consultation with the appropriate agencies, the desired results are not achieved."

Rivarola cites the notorious cases of land reform where the farmers become worse under the DAR's land distribution. The DAR gives the land to the tenant who loses the support services previously given by his landlord, such as production technology, credit and market.

If the DA does not provide these services, the tenant soon finds himself deeper into poverty.

In the unusual crossover cases, mangroves are often destroyed as malls may be reclassified development by the Philippines, 80 percent of the mangrove areas, which formerly covered 176,231 hectares, have been converted to fishponds.

Many of these conversions have contributed to the rapid destruction of coastal areas. In several instances, only a few well-off individuals with sufficient capital to invest have benefited from this aquaculture industry, to the detriment of the poor local communities.

What is worse is that poor management and unsustainable practices have led to the abandonment of 20-40 percent of fishponds, leaving bare and degraded salt flats or acid-sulphate soils. Through indiscriminate mangrove conversion into fishponds, may make the aquaculture growth rate look better, the welfare of the community becomes far worse. (At coordination with the DENR can help put an end to this.

In the case of trade, Rivarola says, "Selling our goods remains a key problem. We must move from a production-to-marketing orientation. This is where DA can coordinate better with DTI to find more business opportunities (such as marketing tie-ups with processing firms) and more export markets."

This June, Petrofocus hosts a NAFC working group to ensure this needed coordination. Its members will and only be DA, DAR, DENR and DTI, but also a private sector and a local government unit (LGU) representative to ensure the right focus in agriculture development.

Conclusion

The key to agriculture development and the improved welfare of the farmers and fisherfolk is good governance. Private sector participation, decentralization, accountability and coordination are crucial ingredients. It is hoped that in the forthcoming meetings between the Alyansa and the newly elected and appointed government officials, these ingredients will be included in the new recipe for good governance in agriculture.

The author is chair of Agrariwatch, a private sector initiative, former undersecretary of agriculture and trade and industry, and former chair and Cabinet secretary for Pres. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's transition. He hopes he, or suggestions, e-mail agrariwatch@yahoo.com or telefax 812-03 38/05.

COMMENTARY

Petron profits up 77% to P786M

By Abigail L. Ho

OIL MAKER Petron Corp. registered a 77 percent surge in profits to P786 million in the first quarter from P445 million in the same period last year on the back of stronger sales and a favorable market.

Sales revenues increased by 14 percent to P62.5 billion from P54.5 billion in 2003, with growth mostly coming from sales to the National Power Corp.

The state firm accounted for 31 percent of Petron's total sales volume last year.

Volume sold to customers from other energy likewise posted growth. Retail sales also climbed up 67 percent growth.

Sales of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) increased by almost 3 percent.

The company's operating expenses for the January-March period, however, rose almost 23 percent higher at close to P1.3 billion from P1.1 billion in the same period the year before.

But the growth in sales from all major sectors more than compensated for the rise in expenses, pushing the net income margin of 8.6 percent from 7.3 percent in 2003.

"The sales performance to date is the outcome of several initiatives we have launched across business units," said Virgilio Balvino, Petron public affairs manager. Petron gained market share in 2003 despite a 1.9 percent decline in total oil demand, and we are aiming to sustain and even surpass the gains we made."

Apart from spending for various marketing-related activities, Petron this year has earmarked P1.89 billion for two projects that will upgrade its Bataan refinery.

Trading stopped for 10 firms that failed to submit report

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE PHILIPPINE Stock Exchange (PSE) will suspend trading for 10 companies that have failed to submit annual financial reports.

The companies are holding firms Zippy-ride Realty Holdings Inc., Wise Holdings Inc., Oriente Holdings, United Resources & Holdings, Solid Group Inc., Ionian Iron Himalayan International, Forum Pacific, Oil Estate Corp., OMCI Holdings and Cyber Bay Corp.

The PSE said the 10 companies did not submit their annual reports for 2003, while some of them were warned from and delisted.

As a result, trading in these companies will be temporarily stopped on Monday.

Cyber Bay for its part, wrote the PSE explaining why it could not submit its annual report.

It also asked the PSE for a voluntary suspension of trading until it has complied with the requirements.

Cyber Bay said it is being an "abnormal situation" where its only asset or investment approved by two administrations had been cancelled by the Supreme Court in a November 2003 decision.

Earlier dubbed as Centennial City Inc., Cyber Bay is involved in the development of reclaimed land in Manila Bay. Cyber Bay wholly owns Central Bay Reclamation and Development Corp., formerly the Amari Coastal Bay Development Corp.

Amari has a joint venture agreement with the Public Estates Authority for the reclamation of 750 hectares of land along the Manila Cavite coastal road.

The master plan envisions the development of a world-class center of commerce, entertainment, shopping and education, with some residential communities thrown in.

The high court earlier nullified the amended joint venture contract between PEA and Amari saying, among others, that reclaimed lands are public domain and could not be sold to private enterprises.

Cyber Bay pointed out that the Supreme Court decision has not clearly defined its rights under the contract with the Public Estates Authority since has the high court ordered how the company would be reimbursed.

Management is discussing with its board and auditors how to treat their investments in the financial report.

Farm sector . . .

cessing facilities and the operation of new irrigation projects, increased planting and improved productivity due to wider use of hybrid seeds and other farm inputs.

He said corn output also went up due to increased harvest areas, favorable weather and improved yield especially among farmers in Cagayan Valley, the Soccsksargen Region of Manilla Mindanao, Northern Mindanao, Socsargen, and Ilocos due to the increased use of hybrid seeds.

Lantayan said that despite a slight decline in cattle output, the livestock sub-sector managed to grow, posting a 3.5-percent expansion in the first quarter due to the higher production of carabao, hogs, goat and dairy products.

He said poultry also grew 3.4 percent, although slightly lower than the 4.06-percent expansion recorded in the first quarter of 2003.

DISCLOSURES

STELA Corp. reduced its listed shares by 3,877 common shares which represent the unaccounted shares that cannot be traced to any support registrations.

* * *

ELITE directors of **International Container Terminal Services Inc.** were Enrique Razon Jr., chair; Eduardo Soriano, vice chair; Jose Rizalino Marbella; Ramon Del Rosario, Andres Soriano III, Ernest Bumgarner, Ramon Magsaysay and Octavio Victor Espinosa.

* * *

PHILCAT Finance Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 30, 10 a.m. at the 3/F 2060 Chuang Yang Enterprises, Makati City. Stockholders of record as of April 30 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

PHILIPPINE Seven Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 21, 3 p.m. at the 3/F of Holiday Inn Galleria, Pasig City. Only stockholders of record as of April 30 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

PHOENIX Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 17, 3 p.m. at the 2/F of OMNI-Ortis Building, San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City. Stockholders of record as of May 17 will be entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

ABOITIZ Transport System Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 30, 3 p.m. at the Manila AAA Function Rooms of Makati Shangri-La Hotel. Only stockholders of record as of May 14 are entitled to vote at the meeting.

* * *

PILIPINO Telephone Corp. disclosed the resignation of Eduardo Gana as director of the company following the full divestment of SEC Asian Infrastructure Fund L.P.'s shares in PilTel. *Compiled by Marivic D. Zelosa, PSE Research*

RP trade show generates $66M

By Rommel W. Chuvinga

THE SECOND TO conclude Manila 'IMME International registered a total of $66.3 million in receipts, according to the Department of Trade and Industry.

Organized by DTI's export promotional arm, Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions (CITEM), Manila IMME is the country's biggest trade show on home furnishings, gifts and holiday décor as well as fashion accessories.

Data from the DTI show that around 2,000 foreign and local buyers attended last month's exhibition. Of the foreign contingent, 236 were buyers were from Great Is., Cyprus, Czech Republic, Hungary, Finland, French Polynesia, Fiji Islands, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago, South Korea, Oman, Bahrain and Jordan.

"Increased participation proves that the country, through its Manila IMME International, is earning a niche for its well-crafted products in the global marketplace and is getting exposition as a prime source of premium merchandise," Trade Secretary Cesar V. Purisima said.

The official added that according to a Cetra survey, "design and quality consistently have always been local edge among other countries."

Based on the average daily expenses of foreign guests and local exhibitors, Manila IMME also generated P1.8 billion in revenues.

Given also repeated that more buyers were coming back to the Manila IMME because of its ability to source raw materials used in Philippine products.

"According to the foreign buyers, (the exhibit) had exceptionally crafted merchandise and unusual designs," Purisima said.

"Our vision is to make the Philippines a global player in furniture, furnishings, gifts, holiday décor and fashion accessories sectors," he said. "This will entail a sustained effort to develop export showcase set top-of-the-line products and services to prospective markets."

Earlier, the DTI reported that total exports of woodcraft and furniture increased by 7.6 percent to $320 million in 2003 from $298 million in 2002.

Still, Purisima called on industry players to work on becoming a dominant player in the world market through combined innovation and competitive pricing.

"Although our industry has made tremendous progress over the years, this is not enough because we has the myths a duty in the world market," the official said.

The DTI cited world industry figures which showed that Philippine exports accounted for only 0.2 percent of world furniture demand.

PURISIMA

Firms ordered to appoint compliance officers

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission will require all listed companies to appoint an official or director as compliance officer to safeguard corporate governance principles.

Atty. Mercedes Gotiangco Fernandez, SEC chair, said the circular will cover those financing companies, investment houses, fund managers, distributors, pre-need companies, and mutual fund or investment companies.

Certification for the compliance officer will be issued after he passes a written examination on industry laws and regulations.

A person already tasked to be the company's compliance officer may continue acting in that capacity after he passes the written test within one year from the effectivity of the circular.

Companies that fail to comply with the certification will be slapped a fine of P10,000 and P500 for each day of delay in the penalty.

Elizabeth L. Sanchez

Gov't warns oil firms against big price hikes

By Abigail L. Ho

THE DEPARTMENT of Energy warned local oil firms against taking advantage of escalating prices of oil in the world market by implementing "unwarranted" increases in local pump prices.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo herself issued a directive to the DOE to closely monitor price increases that the oil companies would implement and ensure that these were not higher than necessary.

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez said in a statement yesterday that the DOE would "exercise appropriate sanctions under the Oil Deregulation Law to those that would take advantage of the skyrocketing world market prices.

"The DOE views that the pressure to raise domestic pump prices is strong given prevailing oil fundamentals, but I am strongly warning the oil companies not to take advantage of the situation. We urge them to only increase prices as necessary," he said.

New oil players, particularly members of the Independent Philippine Petroleum Companies Association (IPPCA), said pump prices of gasoline and diesel would go up by P1 to P1.20 either in the next few days, on Monday at the latest.

IPPCA chair Fernando Manzano said in an earlier interview that new oil players, all of which had no refineries here and rely imported finished products, would no longer absorb the high costs of petroleum products.

He said under-recoveries for gasoline are now at P3.50 a liter and diesel at P2.74 a liter, from Oct. 2003 when the price increase that they wanted to implement every two weeks.

According to data from the DOE, international oil prices for 15-year highs at $35.29 a barrel on May 13, due mainly to the continuing crisis in Iraq, rebounding economies all over the world and persistent low reserves in the United States.

In April, the benchmark Dubai crude was priced at an average of $31.08 a barrel, $1.00 more higher than the $30.03 a barrel average posted in March.

Diesel and unleaded gasoline based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (MOPS) both reaches the 5-month premium likewise soared to historical highs this month.

As of May 13, MOPS-based diesel had a month-to-date average of $45.09 a barrel, MOPS-based gasoline, on the other hand, was at a high $48.71 a barrel.

Unleaded gasoline hit a historical high of $50.00 a barrel on May 6.

Over the US benchmark New York Mercantile Exchange (NYMEX) soared to $40 a barrel levels last week. Prices there closed at $41.03 a barrel Thursday, another 13-year high.

OFW remittances . . .

From page B-1

ly months of the year encouraged some OFWs to hold off remittances to exploit depreciated higher exchange rates in the future. However, the peso depreciation has ceased to reach as the market participants proved inflows are just those OFW remittances for those foreign investments in the securities.

In 2003, OFW remittances amounted to $7.64 billion, 6.3 percent better than its collections a year ago.

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL BANK

NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of Stockholders of the Philippine National Bank will be held on May 28, 2004 at 9:00 a.m. at the Ballroom, Upper Lobby, Century Park Hotel, 599 Pablo Ocampo Sr. St., Malate, Manila.

The Agenda for the meeting is as follows:

1. Call to Order
2. Secretary's Proof of Notice and Quorum
3. Approval of the Minutes of the 2003 Annual Stockholders' Meeting held on May 27, 2003
4. Report of the President on the Results of Operations for the Year 2003
5. Approval of the 2003 Annual Report
6. Ratification of All Acts and Proceedings of the Board of Directors and Corporate Officers since the 2003 Annual Stockholders' Meeting
7. Election of Directors
8. Appointment of External Auditor
9. Other Matters
10. Adjournment

Minutes of the 2003 Annual Stockholders' Meeting as well as resolutions of the Board of Directors from May 27, 2003 will be available for examination during office hours at the Office of the Corporate Secretary.

Only stockholders of record as of April 26, 2004 will be entitled to notice of and vote at this meeting. Registration will begin at 8:00 a.m.

If you cannot personally attend the meeting, you may designate your authorized representative by submitting a PROXY to the Office of the Corporate Secretary not later than 5:00 p.m. on May 19, 2004. Any proxies so received will be validated on May 20, 2004, 9:30 a.m. at the Office of the Stock Transfer Agent at Allied Bank Center, 6754 Ayala Avenue, Makati City.

Pasay City, March 5, 2004

RENATO J. FERNANDEZ
Corporate Secretary

BIR misses April target by 5.8%, nets ₱53.02B

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue missed its collection goal for April, normally considered the make-or-break month for the government's endeavors to

The BIR, which accounts for two-thirds of the government's revenue collection, blamed the off-target performance mainly on lower than expected collections from large corporations.

The BIR said in a statement that its collection for April, the month when the bulk of the year's taxes are remitted by individual and corporate taxpayers, stood at only P53.02 billion compared with the P56.3 billion target.

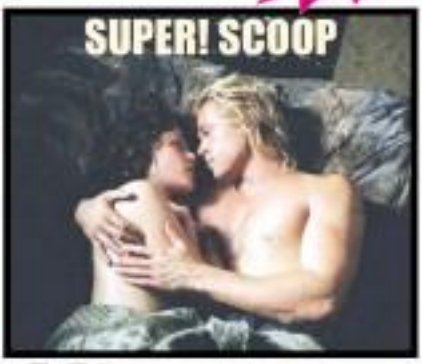
It was the third time this year that the BIR failed to meet its monthly collection goal, although the April collection was the BIR's highest single-month collection in recovery.

In January and February, the BIR missed its P58.64-billion and P59.63-billion targets, but it remained confident that it could meet its full-year goal of P477 billion.

"The biggest worry comes from the lower aggregate taxes of some 240 large taxpayers (in April," said the BIR in the statement.

BIR Commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr. said he has instructed an in-depth investigation of companies belonging to the large taxpayers division to determine the cause of their lower remittances for the month compared with previous years' levels.

SATURDA Super



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A Pitt stop with Brad Pitt

By Alexis L. Lainez

IF your face has launched a thousand magazines, racing pulses and "Sexiest Man Alive" gibes, what else is there to do? Well, how about playing a mythical hero worthy of the gods.

That's precisely what Brad Pitt does in "Troy," Warner Bros.' big-budget sword-and-sandals adaptation of Homer's "The Iliad," by it, Hollywood's pretty boy has Adonis-head-inhibits the role of Achilles. So, that Achilles...hunt and all.

For those a little rusty on their Cliff's Notes, Achilles is the warrior whom Agamemnon, King of the Mycenaeans, dispatches in to retrieve Helen...of the known as a thousand ships fame—after she leaves her husband, Agamemnon's brother King Menelaus, for Prince Paris of Troy.

As is appropriate for a tale of Homeric proportions, the film features sweeping battle scenes, murderous-pinwing sword fights, the usual collection of flowing Greek garb and just-off-the-mall-cuties-minding body armor, and enough gloriously in show of Brad Pitt to earn him into the year's gladiator. Or a spokesman for radiantly blond hair dye.

It's also enough to remind you that "Trojan" was once a sword associated with a movies call beast...and not a brand of condoms.

Shot in exotic locations that ranged from Malta to Mexico, the film itself weathered a string of epic setbacks. They included everything from hundred-degree heat and hurricanes that enmeshed cost, in a ballooning budget and a last-minute relocation from Morocco to Malta after the US was outta Iraq because imminent.

Then, there was the cast major stumbling block that sidelined the production for several months: Flu...how soon the tragicomic pace, wow...cost his Achilles tendon.

Those days, Pitt remains a cheerful sport about it all, seeing philosophy about the nature of the story's characters and giving props to his co-stars, who include Eric Bana and Orlando Bloom, his enduring such a demanding shoot.

It's all in keeping with Pitt's laid-back persona. After all, the 40-year-old actor has seen his share of battles in Hollywood. Since giving audiences a collective orgasm in 1991 for his scene-stealing turn in "Thelma and Louise," to which he played a hustler who pleasures and then rose Geena Davis' character, Pitt has added fresh wonders and dimension to his role-fit resume. He also copped an Oscar nomination in 1996 for his lushly supporting turn in "Twelve Monkeys."

While he's often remembered for his Method-esque performance in "Legends of the Fall," few realize that early threw of his films—"Interview With the Vampire," "Seven" and "Oscar's Movie"—are Some fish box-office hits that made over $100 million. The one, while noteworthy in showcasing Pitt's desire to stretch as an actor...include a slew of forgettable duck: "The Devil's Own," "Meet Joe Black," "The Mexican," "Spy Game."

Still, his blinding star power and affable personality...not to mention his high-profile marriage to Jennifer Aniston—have kept him high on the A list and a prime target for the paparazzi and the glossies. It's something "Troy" won't likely remedy any time soon.

Last month, Pitt met with reporters in New York, where he gamely braved a gauntlet of interviews enough to kill Achilles. Dressed in a fitting hugging pillow-and-gray striped shirt and faded jeans—his head shorn of its Olympian glory—Pitt spoke with the relaxed, low drawl of a native.

As he entered the hotel suite, he let out a huge sigh before plopping down on his chair and flashing the gracious smile of the weary. "When you're an actor of this magnitude...on a film of this scale and with the stakes so high...the inside is never cool.

This film really put you through the ringer. You quit smoking, packed on considerable muscle and went through snow-descending boot camp. What was the toughest thing about it all?

I had a lot of time going over it—dialect, doing a lot of research, dealing with a unique piece of literature. The most difficult thing was after the research, you get to take the variety that you'd have to wait to film it. The initial training was really difficult. It's a very arduous, difficult shoot: 130-degree weather, cliff-side locations which were beautiful. They actually paid off. So what was the toughest thing? I really think it was just having to wait to shoot the stuff.

What convinces a person to take on a role as mythic as Achilles—is a film based on "The Iliad," or how?

There were several reasons. I loved his plight, this quest, this search for some kind of meaning in his life, this decision he must make (to some kind of glory). He has this line: 'I want what all men want, I just want it now.' Family and love—he's always wrestling with it. He was forged from experience, it wasn't about adopting any belief system or dogma or something that he knew to be true. He had to experience it and make some very hard mistakes. I loved ultimately that he was a man, and I find that all very interesting and very human.

I think your most compelling performances have been the ones in which you've scrubbed yourself up: "Twelve Monkeys," "Snatch," "Fight Club"...

I think so ... I think they've been more interesting.

And here, you literally play a demigod. Yeah.

Troy Story

HAVE you seen Troy yet? Better still, have you seen Troy's Dickies?

Then scamper over to Rockby's (sold out!) at Tomas Morato on Friday, 21st of May to see "Troy pound!" featuring Troy as the new endorser of Dickies' underwear.

He will be joined by the hottest local cover players and male mannequins on a night of pure Dude. Picture this: guests Ani Tandoan, Dan Alfaide, John Pereira, Brandon Gibby, Willy Wicca, M Magpayo, among others—all to drool over us.

After years of resolutely keeping his clothes on, Troy has finally decided to shed them to reveal his Dickies (put in crinkled). Aubrey Miles and the rest of the female (and female wannabe) population will be pleased.

Expect eclipsed lines for passersby only, and as you can see, this new chapter of Troy's story will pen as a deeper sense of cards standing.

Other celebs wearing Dickies

A Pitt Stop with Brad Pitt

From page D1

Do you hope to go back to some of those quirky characters?

No, I'll bounce around. But this one, it was really important to start off [with] that designed exercise, and to see the inner turmoil in that. To me, it makes the outer turmoil all the more resonant with the idea that he's got everything on the lam side, but also something torn within.

Do you think your choices of roles, then, has been rational?

I don't ... [pauses] I guess it's unusual. It hasn't felt unusual. But Achilles, it was just time to take on something, I guess, iconic. Dealing with the great themes that resonate in all our lives. I had not worked for two years and I came along and I really ... it just spoke to me. It felt like the right thing to do. It felt like something really difficult to take on, and it was gonna take a lot of work, which it was. I was really hungry for that at the time.

You just wanna try different things because you've been done certain roads. And I'm just not one to keep repeating that. It would be very monotonous for me. You just wanna try new things and see how you stand up.

How does one research a character like Achilles and help feel then bring it down to something earthly and real?

Well, fortunately there's been so much research and writing done on "The Iliad" that I had a wealth of information to peruse and digest. And I call what speaks to me and what I know I can translate on the screen. So I had months and months of time to do the research and really really enjoy. And that's the most fun, because that's the point where you're discovering. That's the point where you explore.

Tell us about the dance.

I think a real romantic life in Malta, in a dance house on the side of a hill, and kept pretty isolated because it's one of the worst things are actors do. But it really helps for the tone of the part. We never all ate at the same restaurant with the idea that he's got everything on the lam side, but also something torn within.

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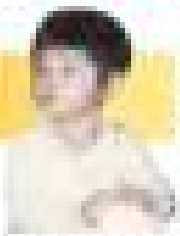
**Do you think your choices

SATURDAY Supplement

A whip-smart depiction of what it's like to be young, rich, and slightly messed up in the '00s

Welcome to 'The OC'!

Age against the machine



Gino de la Paz

MISCHA Barton is everywhere these days. Not that I'm complaining. The London-born teen—a three-way cross between Jodie Kidd, Kate Moss, and Katie Holmes—is beautiful, lanky, and extremely lucky. For one thing, she doesn't have the unfortunate crossed teeth her countrymen are known for. More significantly, she stars in Fox's summer youth drama "The OC," which looks to reinvigorate today's dormant teen television landscape in a bigger-ass way.

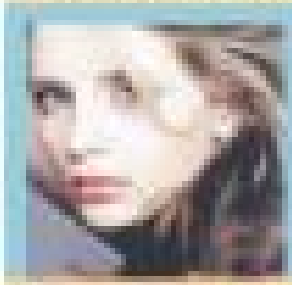
Taking its name from the hip-hop slang for Orange County, California, "The OC" is part of the current resurgence in all things Cali in teen flicks pop culture universe. The hit show joins beach reds, OMC California t-shirts, and—oh brave! Abs Cbn's appearance at the Golden Arches' brand of cute-kissed cool. Carrying the American flag as far as international teen-vue TV is concerned, "The OC" has even become mandatory hipster viewing in Britain, where the dismal soggy weather makes Southern California's bikini-clad vocation—the national equivalent of The Beach Boys—seem so desirable. But why does "The OC" stand out?

Unlike anecdotal-teen reality programming that's choreographed to dumb you down, "The OC" is a pooch-dog update to the teenage years and a whip-smart depiction of what it's like to be young, rich, and slightly messed up in the '00s. Now that the Zoey Bartel-Dawson cash register has ka-chinged, the producers for Pine Creek TV Weekend at Web Spots. The Will need to bodyslam for the privilege

PHOTO CONTINUED ON

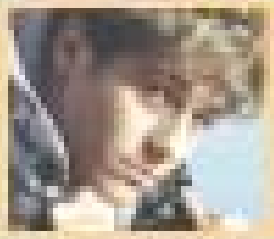
California knows how to party

They're sadly unable to play in your video TV. Here the kids found out of "The OC".



Mischa Barton

As: Marissa Cooper
Born: January 24, 1986
In: London, England but currently lives in NYC
Also seen in: Europe (please) video "Addicted," Bobby Deol, you may have spotted her as the young ghost who threw spoon 2003's "The Lizzie Bonet"
Biggest WOW throwback: Princess-ass-cool Jessica Mattis
The words: The beauty has beans

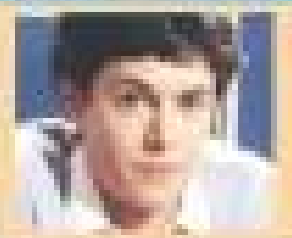


Benjamin McKenzie

As: Ryan Atwood
Born: September 11, 1979
In: Austin, Texas
Also seen in: 2002 "The Center" in which played a teen molested by a priest
Biggest WOW throwback: Shooting Dylan McKay
The words: Ain't there the wrong side-mike

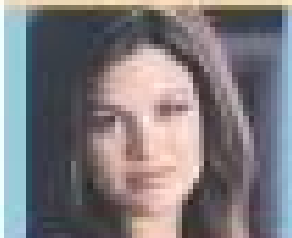
Chris Carmack

As: Luke Ward
Born: December 22, 1980
In: Washington, DC
Also seen in: 2000's Dasani campaign as well as ads for Abercrombie & Fitch
Biggest WOW throwback: Abandoned Street Gangsta
The words: He's a bully with a conscience



Adam Brody

As: Seth Cohen
Born: April 9, 1981
In: San Diego, California
Also seen in: 2003's skate-or-die movie "Grind" and a 2002 "Roswell" episode as Jackie Cassen
Biggest WOW throwback: Geek David Silver
The words: He gets the chicks



Rachel Bilson

As: Summer Roberts
Born: November 25, 1981
In: Los Angeles, California
Also seen in: a Washington commercial, as well as the "Dirty Girls" episode of "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" in 2001 and the "8:05" episode of "That '70s Show" in 2004
Biggest WOW throwback: Jenny girl Kelly Taylor
The words: She pretty hooker

Welcome to 'The OC'!

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with the sexy "Beverly Hills, 90210" critics "Green Point" and the underrated "Popular," but both series ultimately danced to the death cycle of poor ratings in 2000-2001. Now the smash continues with the not-it-twin-brilliance of "Gilmore Girls," the "Party of Five" vampire melodrama of "Dawson's Creek," and the backstabbing as metaphor for life freshness of "One Tree Hill." However, "The OC" from rival network Fox is the likely successor to the prime time throne and here's a couple reasons why.

More bounce in California

First of all, the backdrop is pretty rich. The show's executive producer Josh Schwartz — the son of "Charlie's Angels" fame — and creator Josh Schwartz are both mid-level Orange County misfits. Their decision to make Orange County, Calif., the setting of "The OC" (although Malibu would have also kept Aaron's new logical since their perspectives are from the inside out. History has proven that audiences go bonkers for fictional characters with unbelievably privileged lives (see BBC) and Schwartz were careful not to make the lead families of "The OC," the Cohens and the Coopers, appear cartoon-like. Instead, the duo presents their stories with equal parts of glam and grit and glamorizes otherwise wicked and dark with the occasional use of designer sunnies.

Well, "The OC" deals with issues that are emblematic of the universal teen experience, although effectively sheltered, the kids of "The OC" are their issues seem the same as portray believable characters. In the pilot episode, for instance, Ryan, (Benjamin McKenzie) and Seth (Adam Brody) are invited to a beach house party with enough booze to light up the Eiffel Tower, a lovable dork, Seth wasted with a combination of awe and horror upon discovering that the Ben & Jerry he's ever been invited to was like a drug-den from the all-to-another episode, primetime soap Melrose (Melissa Rivers) life as a weekend of tequila and Vanilla, a reflection of the prescription drug problems that both MTV's "Undone" and "Jess Vegas have recently brought to mass attention. The cast's sexy energy portrayal of cluttered youth coming of age too fast to half of smart irony and well-worked acting. They're clearly learned from the mistakes of their incredibly ungainly "90s counterparts like Claire Danes in "My So-Called Life," which to me is a sign of our generation's evolution. More than that, the ensemble is made up of actors who are unknown enough to grow into their characters as the series progresses.

Last and most interestingly, "The OC" understands the kinetic relationship between nationwide like dialogue and good music. Sure by millions of point-of-contact in the global hi-tri-crowd — the viral pop phe—able bubbling under the progress is completed place to take prime shelf to being a springboard for alternative musical talent. "The OC" champions emo, or emotional rock. Best personified by Adam Brody's character Seth, emo is a "commercial term for punk influenced band rock that plumbs the emotional depths of teenage angst with sensitive, introspective intelligence," according to Kevin Bell's Rock Book Dictionary Volume 3. "The OC" features music from familiar cult acts like Phantom Planet and Rooney to lesser-but-promised bands such as Spiralling and I Am Ghost. With music-oriented producers on board, the show's soundtrack developments never remain grounded with more than Bigger Lee, Jeff Buckley and Sebastian Bach. To keep the pretense of the show as message, references to pop are thankfully made with the Black Eyed Peas, not with Hilary Duff.

The greatest view

As a young TV scientist, I seem to be attracted by shows with a burning hatred for logical, rich people, and usually whole years overlooking wealth to admirable or immoral in any world. So to speak, "The OC" goes a little longer into the line of our television experience, which is why I think it's the greatest thing I've seen before. I don't think I'll ship you my soft spot for TV shows like "The OC" just yet.

The greatest advice, in many areas revealed to escape from the hectic world of life through a breakout show set in Orange County I disagree. More than on one personal dimension, "The OC" successfully finds lessons that transcend when you feel invincible, carefree, and really, really hot. Worth only happens once, that precise moment before life's failures the Lake Wards of the real world... Savoring the shit out of you and about, "Welcome to the OC, bitch!"

(Is God real? I said "The OC" on cable channel FTC. Tuesdays at 9 p.m. Mail me at wrightdawg@yahoo.ca, beyond.)

BRAB HANDS and nappy savvy with Tim Tayag and RJ Ledesma

T-BACK TO BACK. Tim Tayag gets chic-wannabe while RJ Ledesma gets the Royal Tru Orange treatment

Zeit-guys in 'The Men's Room'

By Martin Valdez

A maverick infamous for blazing wit and withering cynicism, and a businessman still waiting for puberty to sink in make an unlikely couple with a lot to say

IT'S good to be a guy. The species requires little to tolerate and thrive, and has proven resilient to evolution and change. Almost as much as the fifth crocodile and the common cockroach. Millions of years have straightened his back and diminished his facial hair, but in his heart, he's still the same old Neanderthal that we all fell in love with in the first place. On May 23, the devolution begins with "The Men's Room."

Tim Tayag and RJ Ledesma are non-regular guys with not-so-regular careers. Tim is a regular maverick on the round-up comedy circuit infamous for his blazing wit and withering cynicism. RJ is a businessman-turn-event host who is still waiting for puberty to sink in. Together, they make an unlikely couple with a lot of things to say. Now they've got a speaking installation called "The Men's Room" from which they intend to share their observations. God help us all.

The show focuses on the two zeit-guys exploring the intricacies of the Filipino male living in a world bursting with glorious potential. Basically, they're saying no pick-up scenes. Bouncing off one another's dynamic, polarized personalities, "The Men's Room" hopes to capitalize on the relationship enjoyed and endured between RJ and Tim (think Ben Stiller and Owen Wilson).

Every Tuesday at 11:30 in the evening on Channel 23, we can hence follow the misadventures of the two semi-buff, pseudo-intelligent, and very funny guys, as they plow and plod through a bevy of theatrical guests and poignant vignettes. They're on right after "Oprah" and offer everything she doesn't. In their own words, "The Men's Room" is "Da anti-Oprah." Here are some excerpts from the biggest interview with the two handsome bandits.

On the show:

RJ: We have one guest per show, always a woman...

Tim: A sexy, smart woman...

RJ: ...and Tim and I are in a weekly competition to see who gets the girl.

Tim: There are interviews, comedy sketches, body piercings, raw-dish and games. We even have one reality-based segment segment called "Who's the Man" wherein we assume the role of a regular guy with a set-odd job, like a fishball vendor, and try to get women to go out with us and such.

On the purpose of the show:

Tim: To enlighten all the men out there, so these men have to get more sensitive.

RJ: I thought we just wanted to see scantily-clad women?

On the dangers of a misogynistic perspective:

Tim: We'd rather not use the word "misogynist." Some of our viewers won't know what that means.

RJ: "The Men's Room" humorously depicts the life and times of the Pinoy male, with an emphasis on troubled romantic seasons. We do have fun being Pinoy males, but we're also poking fun at being a Pinoy male.

On what the show offers female viewers:

RJ: Tits and?

Tim: Laughter. The best medicine.

RJ: We offer our viewers an option for late-night TV. Mostly you have investigative journalistic shows, infomercials or documentaries. With "The Men's Room," you have a late-night show that is fun, light and irreverent. And has scantily-clad women at the same time!

Tim: Although, I must think we're above infomercials starring Chuck Norris or Christie Brinkley ads.

On similarities to "The Man Show" (in the US):

Tim: All similarities are purely coincidental. Besides, trampolines (for a Girls on Trampolines segment) are too expensive.

RJ: We may just have our production people casting them around instead.

On a dream guest for the show:

RJ: One lang? Aubrey Miles, Phoom Banlumlu...?

Tim: 80's scene. Tita Fostero Ledesma.

On why they're really doing this show:

Tim: To offer something different. Make 'em laugh, but also make them think. Guys still are how they can improve themselves, and girls may understand what's going on in a guy's mind. Mostly sex.

RJ: I just want to make money.

On those supposed "real" men out there, bristling with biceps and chiffonaire ads:

Tim: Who are they?

RJ: Sobs, my name is RJ Please, watch our show.

"The Men's Room" airs 11:30 p.m. Tuesdays starting May 23 on Channel 23.

CAN he be the next Fresh Prince of Pop?

This is Erik's moment

Call it a stroke of luck. The first chance that you see and hear everywhere on the boob tube these days actually lost in "Star in A Million."

If it weren't for his comeback in the wild card category, he would not have made it to the finals. But it seems like someone up there had greater plans for this blessing-in-disguise at Estrella Agricultura College.

Up to the last minute, he was undecided about his winning song. He woke up one night and heard his voice humming the tune and realized it was meant for him. "This is the Moment" eventually disembodied to be this season, displacing Gibbsmix cumsur favorite Mayonnaise.

Since we are a country in love with "American Idol," naturally, the basic counterpart would elicit an much enthusiasm for its contenders, whose life stories get lapped up by the masses. Thus, "Erik the Ubiquitous" was born.

His first album, aptly titled "This is the Moment," is flying off the shelves. A friend of mine swore to Tower Records looking for it and was dismayed that it got sold out....in its first week. Is this the birth of the next Pinoy Pop Prince?

In the album, he displays an emotionally charged repertoire of Pinoy love songs and current faves. He even has a medley of songs sung by both Gary V and Jhoni in Nieves, songs are that he could very well find love.

The Pinoy music scene is in dire need of new idols with true talent.

Erik may just be the one.

The thing about fame is it is something that everybody seems to achieve. But before you get it, it takes you a ton of hardship, determination and patience.

The thing I love most about what I do is I get to inspire a lot of people through music.

People might be surprised to know that I am Thai too in "IDOLS."

Tim Yap

The most important thing I have ever learned is That 'Patience' is one of the best things an individual should possess.

I wish when I started all I'd been told that I'm already in a different world, that I ought to be more kind and wise to everyone... If only, all for me.

The worst thing that ever happened to me was When I was in the 3rd week of the month by Coach of "Star in A Million."

And what this taught me was That I should never give up no matter what happens.

The happiest moments of my life was When I was declared as the grand prize winner of "Star in A Million."

The answer to happiness is As long as you love what you are doing.

My best ever audit occurred at The one I won in the grand finals.

My super Saturday night consists of I usually do one of your shows and "Star in A Million" during Saturdays.

The comeback to my life would include This is the moment. I believe I can fly. It's believe and my first single in the album "Nightdrying think."

If I were invisible for a day I would like and embrace my greatest ultimate crush

The thing that makes me most angry is Pag may nakikialam ng personal kong gawa.

If I was the most powerful person on earth I would Give everybody big money to marry a new life. "Sounds impossible, but I'd do it. I'd and when I given the chance to be the most powerful person on earth.

The best thing about family is Family...these are the only group of people who you could give your trust and head on to (one of your define as well as in victory. My family completes my being.

When I'm gone they'll probably say That I was a kind of person who really loves music and a friend to everyone.

If money were no object I would If there is peace and harmony in the government... Iraq sending soldiers...

When I retire I would like to: I'd like to live in a place where there is peace and where I could spend the rest of my life with my loved ones.

The world would be a much better place if Kung lahat magkakasundo' magkikiyayan.

My hero is Spiderman.

The thing that makes my life worth living is My family.

My greatest hope for the future is To be an inspiration to all even when I get older.